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ABSTRACT

This handbook on organizing for evaluation use is oriented to those who commission or are administratively responsible for seeing that evaluations are performed. It is practical, clarifying the administrator's role in the evaluation process and providing worksheets for practice. Written with a minimum of technical language, it is useful for administrators at any stage of an evaluation. Basic concepts of evaluation are defined. An array of possible evaluation factors and some interrelationships among the different factors are identified and described. A factor pattern with four clusters is identified, a scenario is presented, and the factor pattern is examined within the context of the scenario. A series of worksheets is provided to note information pertaining to the evaluation situation and to list some positive actions to influence evaluation use. The emphasis is on the administrator's involvement in the planning, execution, and analysis of the evaluation in order to maximize its use. (PN)

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EVALUATION PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

Organizing for Evaluation Use: A Handbook for Administrators

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Project Director

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Organizing for Evaluation Use:
A Handbook for Administrators

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ORGANIZING FOR EVALUATION USE: A HANDBOOK FOR ADMINISTRATORS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Administrators are surely very busy people. There are ever more tasks to attend to, ever more concerns and problems that require time, energy, and concentration. Yet here you are with a book about evaluation in your hands. We'd guess, then, that one of your concerns is likely to be an evaluation of a project with which you are associated, or for which you have administrative responsibility. In view of this concern, there may be a variety of reasons motivating you to examine this book.

Perhaps evaluation is relatively new to you, and you would like some clarification about your role in the process. Or perhaps you are wondering how worthwhile expenditures of time and resources for the evaluation are likely to be and would like to help insure that you get your "money's worth."

Or, you may already have experience participating in evaluation, but been disappointed in the outcome. This time, you'd like to take an active role in making sure that the evaluation is better tailored to your project's needs, though you may not be sure exactly how to go about doing that.

We'd like to reassure you -- you have come to the right place to get immediate help. The authors of this volume provide the following assurances:

- This handbook is oriented specifically to those who commission or are otherwise administratively responsible for seeing that evaluations are performed.
- This handbook is practical; we don't just tell you what to do. Rather, we show you how to do it and provide you worksheets for practice.

- This handbook is easy to read, with a minimum of technical language and a maximum of commonsense advice.
- This handbook is useful for administrators at any stage of an evaluation, whether in the planning process or nearing completion.

Evaluation

Let's clarify for a moment what we mean by "evaluation." When we use the term in this handbook, we are referring to the activity of systematically obtaining information that might be used to change attitudes or to make judgements which can be used to improve the operation of projects. What does this definition mean in practice?

First, note that the word "systematic" implies that there must be a plan to the evaluation. Evaluation is not simply the acquisition of data or information in some haphazard fashion. This organized plan for data (or information) collection should be directed toward obtaining data that will provide answers specifically to the questions or concerns you or others may have about the project. You need to consider carefully how the evaluation plan will help obtain that data. After determining the questions and concerns, "obtaining the desired information" involves several activities: identifying the appropriate information, acquiring the information, analyzing the data, and forming justifiable conclusions based on the data.

Once the appropriate information has been obtained and analyzed, then the conclusions based on this data can be put to use in two major ways. The first of these, stated in our definition, refers to the changing of an attitude or belief about the project or its operation. That is, the findings from the evaluation might influence your (or someone else's) opinion about the project or the way it operates. (While this might have no immediate visible impact on the project, it very well could change or influence actions in the future.) A second way that you could use the conclusions based on the data would be to make actual decisions relating to project operations or even to project continuation. For example, based on the evaluation findings, you might recommend that the project not be refunded for the following year, or else you might make certain modifications in the way that the project operates.

But there's another important feature of this definition: we use the term "evaluation" to refer only to evaluation of an organizational entity (such as a "project" or program). We are not discussing here the evaluation of individuals (such as students, trainees, personnel, managers, etc.). We are discussing projects that operate in organizations such as schools, social service agencies, hospitals, banks, etc. These projects can be at a micro level within the organization (for example, the third-grade mathematics program in one elementary school), or they may be at the macro level (for example, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children social services statewide). In both these examples, though the data collected come from individual participants in the project (either the third-grade students or the AFDC clients), the evaluation deals with the entire project as the entity to be judged, and not with the individuals who have provided the data for analysis.

Evaluation as a Meaningful Activity

Our firm belief, and one that we will endeavor to transmit to you throughout this handbook, is that evaluations should be meaningful to all those involved in the process. Evaluations should have importance, significance, and purpose. In short, the evaluations must be more than window dressing -- they must fulfill a necessary function. We're sure that many of you reading this handbook will recall instances of evaluations -- not meaningful -- which produced nothing more than a dull report to be forever filed away on a dusty shelf. No more!

So what does "meaningful" entail? The first issue is, meaningful to whom? To statisticians, to researchers, to journal publishers? -- No! Meaningful to funding agencies, to higher-level administrators, to the evaluator? -- Maybe! But primarily the evaluation must be meaningful, significant, and important to you and to others who are actively involved with the project and are making decisions about it.

To further understand "meaningful," you need only think about what you would personally consider meaningful. We believe you would think an evaluation meaningful if it were relevant, credible, and actively involving you in its process.

A relevant evaluation should be "on target." It must deal with topical/critical issues (issues of concern to you and to your colleagues), and it must deal with them in an appropriate fashion.

A meaningful evaluation should also be credible. There are several important aspects to credibility. First, the evaluation should have technical credibility (i.e., statistical correctness, properly crafted instruments, valid design, etc.). The technical credibility of the evaluation should be at a sufficiently high level that you and others can feel that the results have been appropriately obtained and are beyond major professional criticism. We note parenthetically that almost every report can be critiqued and found to contain some technical deficiencies: what concerns us here is avoiding glaring inadequacies.

But there's another side to credibility -- let's call it professional credibility. Quite simply, ask yourself if the evaluator is someone you can believe in -- and, by implication, is the evaluation itself something you can trust? Do the evaluator's actions, reports, recommendations instill sufficient confidence that you might want to go ahead, to move on them, to make decisions, to make changes where necessary?

A further dimension of "meaningful" evaluation is that of your own involvement in the evaluation. Ask yourself how drawn you feel to getting involved, to wanting to be close to what is happening. If the evaluation is but a minor consideration among other more pressing priorities, you are unlikely to make a major commitment to it. And without this close involvement on your part, the evaluation undoubtedly will lose credibility.

In sum, then, for an evaluation to be meaningful, you must be able to believe in the evaluation's purpose, to trust its processes and findings, and to participate actively in its conduct. Such active involvement will not only help make the evaluation meaningful to you, but by your example will also encourage meaningful involvement of others close to the project.

Evaluation as an Organized Meaningful Activity

Meaningful evaluations as we have just described them do not come about by chance -- they must be planned for, carefully organized, properly carried out, and effectively communicated to people who intend to use that information. And this is where you can make your greatest contribution.

We consider that you, in your administrative role, are the "organizer" of the evaluation. In terms of our definition of "organizer," this makes you the person ultimately responsible for the evaluation. You play the most important part of all in assuring that the evaluation will turn out to be meaningful. Time and time again, research has shown that it is the presence of a person in a position of authority who takes a personal interest in the evaluation that makes the difference in whether or not results of the evaluation are actually put to use -- and that is certainly a prime indication that a meaningful evaluation has occurred.

"But," you may be saying, "I am only one person. How can I be so important? And besides, I have lots of other responsibilities to attend to other than this one evaluation." We are not saying that you must do everything yourself!

The key to successfully carrying out your role is understanding how to organize, how to structure the evaluation process so that the other interested parties in the evaluation can be involved to best advantage. And you are the one person familiar enough with the context in which the evalution will take place to organize and involve everyone connected with the evaluation process -- yourself, as administrator; the evaluator; the project staff; the project participants; and any other interested parties, whether internal or external to your own organization.

This handbook will give you the information (and the tips) you'll need in your administrative role as the evaluation "organizer" to manage the best, most useful evaluation possible within the context of your project's realities. It will take you through the early stages of the evaluation, which we've termed "Setting the stage" and "Identifying/organizing the participants"; through the execution of the evaluation activities ("Operationalizing the interactive process"); and finally through the concluding phase of the evaluation ("Adding the finishing touches for use"). Here's a brief sample, drawn from the stage labeled "Identifying/organizing the participants":

> Consider for a moment the evaluator. Perhaps you already know some evaluators; there are lots of them available nowadays. Some evaluators may act like remote, clinical researchers who want you to set up controlled experiments in order to evaluate your project. Some evaluators may tell you what needs to be evaluated, with or without your or other interested parties' concerns and questions about the project being discussed and taken into consideration. Still other evaluators may offer you little or no professional guidance in designing the evaluation. If you've worked with any of these kinds of evaluators before, we offer our condolences and our encouragement that _this time_, your evaluation should have an evaluator it merits, an evaluator who is oriented toward the users' concerns and toward producing a meaningful evaluation, a _useful_ evaluation for decision-making.
>
> What does such an evaluator look like in action? The evaluator you should be seeking to hire should ideally be someone who wants to involve you and the other potential users of evaluation information in the planning and the conduct of the evaluation; who asks for your questions and concerns about the project to be evaluated; who has good interpersonal communication skills; who can assess the potential users' preferences for receiving information and responds appropriately; and who is politically aware...

We hope the above example has provided some hint that this handbook does have relevant information to offer you. And if we haven't yet persuaded you, then perhaps we have at least caught your interest sufficiently that you will continue reading before making up your mind.

We conclude this brief introduction by outlining the content of the remainder of the handbook. Chapter II discusses the idea of evaluation use, one of the central concepts in project evaluation. It also introduces the notion of "Factor Patterns," clusters of individual elements which can help you organize your evaluation into recognizable, defined stages that promote evaluation use. Numerous examples accompany the definitions and discussions.

Chapter III goes on to discuss in detail each of the individual clusters of elements which make up the Factor Patterns. You will find suggestions for how to make each of the elements work for you as you organize the evaluation. You'll also find tactics and strategies you can employ if you identify elements in your own evaluation situation which could potentially work against evaluation use.

Chapter IV provides a detailed scenario of one evaluation context. Seen through the eyes of the responsible "organizer," this scenario provides the background against which the organizer shares her thoughts and her activities as the evaluation progresses from the planning stage, through the operational stage, and finally the closing stage. The discussion characterizes the evaluation in terms of the four Factor Patterns introduced in Chapter II and III, and focuses specifically on the issue of maximizing the potential for evaluation use.

Chapter V completes this handbook by providing worksheets for you to use (or practice with) as you consider organizing your own evaluation. By the time you finish this chapter, you will become quite expert as an evaluation organizer!

We know that you are anxious to get started, so we suggest that without further delay, you turn to Chapter II and begin reading about evaluation use.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS EVALUATION USE?

This chapter deals with a central issue in project evaluation -- the use of evaluation as a decisionmaking and administrative tool. Administrators in charge of projects -- people like yourself -- want to run their projects as efficiently as possible and make sure that the projects are as effective as possible. Evaluation can help in these tasks, but only if the information produced by the evaluation is received and used by those who need it most. Our intention in this book is to show you how to organize an evaluation for the express purpose of maximizing its potential for use.

Definition of Key Terms

We've just introduced a few key terms into our discussion, terms which should be clarified before proceeding further. The term project refers to an organized undertaking. Such an undertaking generally requires a staff whose members have different jobs and responsibilities related to carrying out the goals, objectives, and activities of the program being implemented. Here are a few examples of what we mean by "project":

> A school district introduces bilingual instructional procedures to teach English and other subjects to limited English-speaking students.
>
> A medical center introduces training to improve nursing educators' abilities to develop nursing competency tests.
>
> A bank's main office develops procedures for showing branch managers how to implement updated software in their computerized data-processing system.
>
> An infantry division's commander institutes field-training exercises to train company-grade officers in long-range reconnaissance tactics.

A corporation's sales division plans a conference to introduce the successful promotional and sales strategies of one region into other regions.

Each of these projects could be subject to evaluation.

An evaluation collects, analyzes, and reports information on some undertaking such as the projects listed above. It is designed to produce information that will help in decisionmaking: for example, decisions concerned with improving the efficiency of project operation.

Here are some evaluation examples drawn from the five projects identified above:

The school district's bilingual project staff needs evaluation information to make sure that students who need bilingual services are being properly identified. They also need information on how well the instructional component is being implemented, on how successful the project is in preparing students for instruction in English, and on how well the individual schools in the district are doing this job.

The medical center's training unit needs evaluation information on nursing educators' attitudes toward testing. They also need to know how successful the training program is in teaching nursing educators about test development. That is, are the tests they develop after receiving training of higher quality than the tests they developed prior to training.

The senior data-processing staff of the bank's main office could benefit from collecting information on branch managers' attitudes toward the proposed changes in the software system, on the extent to which local branches have a smoothly running system prior to the introduction of changes, and on ways to improve local operations.

The infantry division commander and his headquarters staff need information on the current assignments of officers with long-range patrol training. They especially need location and status information about combat veterans with long-range patrol experience who are available for temporary duty to the training effort. During training, the staff needs information collected on the ground. If the training is divisionwide and intended to meet contingency needs only, division staff will need information on the general performance of company-grade officers in different battle groups. If the training is intended to screen and select commanders of long-range units, the staff will need specific information on each candidate's performance.

The corporation's senior sales executives need information on how well the conference was received by the participants. They may also want follow-up information on whether the successful promotion and sales strategies were implemented as intended. Finally, they need information on whether regional sales volumes remained the same, increased, or decreased after the proposed strategies took effect.

As these examples show, an evaluation can collect different kinds of information at different points in time: before a project begins, during the course of the project, and at the end of the project. Moreover, different kinds of personnel can be involved both in the project itself and in its evaluation.

A project may also have several administrators working at different levels in the overall organization. In this book we will focus primarily on the particular administrator with operational authority over and responsibility for the project being evaluated. We recognize that this administrator may be designated by a variety of titles: project director, principal, program manager, project supervisor, etc. Whatever his or her title, this individual, in essence, performs the functions described below.

The project administrator is the person responsible for the overall operation of the project, the person whose actions and influence usually reach into every aspect of the project and whose administrative responsibilities include dealing with every group or agency with an interest in the project and a stake in its operational procedures and outcomes. One important function of this administrator is to work closely with the evaluator throughout the entire evaluation process.

The following examples, drawn from the cases previously described, identify the person who may best be regarded as the "project administrator," as defined above:

In the school district, the director of bilingual education is likely to be the project administrator. Although he/she may report to others with some influence over the project at the broad policy level (e.g., an assistant superintendent in charge of compensatory education, the superintendent of the school district) nonetheless it is the director of bilingual education who is responsible for the operation of the bilingual project and for its evaluation.

In the medical center, the project administrator is probably the director of nursing education. This person may work with and report to other administrators. But by virtue of position and training, s/he is best equipped to identify areas for which evaluation information is needed.

In the case of the bank, the project administrator is likely to be some fairly senior individual in charge of systemwide computerized data processing. This individual could be a vice president who is knowledgeable about both banking operations and data processing and thus is therefore strategically placed to consider evaluation within the total sphere of banking operations, not only computer systems.

In the infantry division, there are at least two possible candidates for project administrator. In the case of divisionwide contingency training, the division commander is ultimately responsible; he may, however, assign an assistant as project director. In the case of unit-commander screening and selection, the designated project director might be a battalion executive officer with appropriate training and experience.

In the corporate sales division, the project administrator will probably be a senior executive in the headquarters' sales division. While this person reports to the national head of sales, s/he assumes direct responsibility for running the sales project and its evaluation.

Each of the project administrators identified above, then, would have operational responsibility for the project and its evaluation. We contend that this responsibility entails the promotion of evaluation use.

Evaluation Use

What exactly do we mean by "evaluation use"? The term refers to the purposeful, planned consequences that result from applying evaluation information to a problem, question, or concern at hand. Another way of phrasing the definition is to say that "use" is the application of evaluation information or evaluation processes to achieve intended, desired ends.

Two questions arise naturally from the above definition: use by whom? and for what purpose(s)? Let's deal with the first question now.

Use by Whom?

There are many potential "users" of evaluation information. For example, when you look at the program to be evaluated (e.g., the program for which you have overall responsibility), consider who the persons are that actually make the program work. Perhaps you have a staff, a designated project director, or several subadministrators. Perhaps your project involves clients such as parents, citizens, advisory councils, or other groups outside your own organization. Each of these groups can have a professional and a personal interest in the information to be produced by the evaluation; each is a potential user of evaluation. In addition, many projects have another outside audience that can be a potential evaluation user -- a state or federal agency, which often mandate that an evaluation be performed as a condition of granting funds for project operation.

Use for What Purpose(s)?

The range of possible evaluation users is large, but there are only three main categories of evaluation use. The first of these is termed "action use": the intentional use of evaluation to inform decisions about the project being evaluated. An obvious example of action use is a change, made on the basis of evaluation information, in a project's content or methods. Another example of action use is a conclusion, drawn on the basis of evaluation information that the program is running as intended and does not need to be modified at the present time.

Use may result from an evaluation's processes as well as from the data it produces. For example, contacts between the evaluator and the project staff early in the life of the project may result in shared concerns about the need for project modifications, which in turn may lead to actual modifications in project operation. Or the evaluator may indicate that certain data will be collected as part of the evaluation. An understanding of the measures to be used may lead to a recognition of project deficiencies (and changes) before any evaluation data has been collected.

The second kind of use is conceptual in nature. The term "conceptual use" refers to the intentional use of evaluation to modify people's attitudes toward the project. Often, conceptual use arises from the personal exchanges and interactions that take place between the evaluator and potential users, or between the evaluator and the project staff. By its nature, conceptual use does not involve any tangible or identifiable action. Nor can one point to any written document to prove that conceptual use has occurred. Rather, conceptual use is manifested by changes in attitude and, where possible, in subsequent behavior.

Third, the professional literature talks about the "symbolic" use of evaluation, as when an institution "goes through the motions" to show that something required is taking place, that regulations are being followed. Such symbolic use is seen, for example, when an institution contracts to have an evaluation conducted merely to demonstrate compliance for an external agency. The evaluation itself is a way of saying, symbolically, "Look, we are complying with the regulations by submitting our project to evaluation."

Throughout this Guide we will be concerned only with the first two uses of evaluation: action and conceptual. We will not deal with symbolic use for two reasons. First, symbolic use is inherent in the conduct of the evaluation itself. Second, we do not want to encourage evaluations directed only toward symbolic purposes. Such evaluations are a waste of money and time. This book is directed toward making evaluations truly useful so that their conduct will be worthwhile.

Likewise, an evaluation can have both intended and unintended uses. Occasionally, the results of an evaluation can be used in ways that are very different from what was envisioned. For example, the use of the evaluation report by a community organization to demonstrate lack of sufficient support from other agencies. Sometimes these unintended uses are beneficial, sometimes not. We might refer to this as the "impact" of the evaluation in contrast to its "use," which is planned and intended. Since this book is focused on getting you to anticipate and improve the use of evaluation, we will not consider impact in this broader sense.

Here are a few observations which you should keep in mind when you consider organizing your evaluation for action use, for conceptual use, or for both:

- First, not every intended action is preceded by conceptual use. But where action depends on prior conceptual groundwork, you should be sure that this groundwork is laid.
- Second, and conversely, not every conceptual use is followed by an action. But where such progression is warranted, you should make sure that it occurs.
- Third, conceptual use, in itself, may be the final desired effect of many evaluations.

Process and Product

As indicated in the previous discussion, evaluation use can be stimulated by the process of evaluation (such as data collection), by the product of the evaluation (such as a report); or by some combination of the two. Let's define these terms a bit more narrowly.

By evaluation process, we mean the ways in which the evaluation is conducted: for example, the involvement of selected individuals as informants or interviewees; the formal and informal interactions between the evaluator and the users during the study; the data collection procedures.

The evaluation process can affect a project simply by virtue of the fact that it is occurring and is thereby involving project personnel. For example, contacts between the evaluator and the staff are a natural part of the use-oriented evaluation process. Such contacts may lead to changes in the attitudes, behaviors or actions of staff members. To take another example, the project director, in supervising data collection for the evaluation, may develop a closer working relationship with the project staff. This enhanced rapport results from the evaluation process itself, whatever the ultimate findings of the evaluation.

By evaluation product, we mean the organized body of findings, data, recommendations, and other information provided at appropriate points during the evaluation. The evaluation product includes, of course, the final evaluation report, but it may also include interim reports, findings, and recommendations.

The evaluation product can affect a project through people's expectations of the findings. For example, a teacher may change course content or teaching methodology on the basis of preliminary evaluation findings about student achievement. As another example of the effect of evaluation products, a citizen's advisory group may demand that certain project changes be made after hearing some of the evaluator's recommendations.

Let's go back now to the case examples introduced earlier and examine the range of possible users and uses.

> The school district bilingual director may be concerned about the negative attitudes of other teachers (i.e., those outside the bilingual project) toward the project. These outside teachers constitute one possible group of users. The director intends that favorable evaluation information instill more positive teacher attitudes toward bilingual education (conceptual use). The director may believe that the evaluation indicates a need to convince the superintendent and the school board (another group of potential users) that the bilingual program should be expanded. Such an expansion would constitute an example of action use, preceded by conceptual use (convincing the board that expansion is necessary).

The director of nursing education may find that the evaluation results show that the staff lacks the skills necessary for developing sound, valid competency tests. The staff, then, is a potential user of evaluation. The director decides to institute some staff training (an action use). The director also uses the evaluation findings to make recommendations to the board of directors (another group of potential users) about updating nursing education courses. This constitutes an example of conceptual use. The actual updating of the courses would constitute action use.

The bank's project administrator may discover through the evaluation that some branch managers have not kept up with recent technological advances so that they cannot take full advantage of the training program. This administrator, using the evaluation data, design a brief refresher course for these managers (action use). In addition, the evaluation results identify managers who appear to be extremely knowledgeable and competent. The administrator uses this information to come up with some policy recommendations for staff promotion and advancement (conceptual use).

The infantry division project director, after examining the evaluation results, may find that not all battle groups in his division are equally combat-ready. He uses the information to draft recommendations to his superiors for further training (conceptual use). He further uses the evaluation information to make additional recommendations regarding the role of senior NCOs in the training process. In this instance, conceptual use of evaluation was the intended, desired use. To the extent that his recommendations are implemented, the evaluation also results in action use.

The corporate sales project administrator intends that the evaluation data be used to design subsequent training for staff (conceptual use). However, when the data are actually received, an immediate need for additional staff in one region becomes apparent. The administrator makes the decision to transfer staff (an action use, though previously unplanned).

Organizing for Evaluation Use: An Overview

We've now discussed several important facets of what we initially identified as a major issue in project evaluation: namely, evaluation use. Our discussion next leads us to the question of organizing for evaluation use.

We already know that, within any given evaluation, there is generally one individual who fulfills the function of a project administrator; that there are two possible uses -- action and conceptual -- toward which the evaluation is aimed; and that there are a multitude of possible users of evaluation information. And we've already shared our belief that a major responsibility of the person identified as project administrator is to promote the use of evaluation. So what can the administrator do to organize the evaluation in such a manner that its potential for use is enhanced?

The key to understanding the role of the administrator in structuring the evaluation process is to appreciate the complex array of circumstances that surround an evaluation. Within each evaluation situation there are a multiplicity of factors which can have an effect on evaluation use. A factor, then, is any characteristic or element present in a given situation which can affect the outcome of that situation. When an administrator is cognizant of these factors, and when he or she actively structures the evaluation to take maximum advantage of those factors known to favor evaluation use, then the potential for evaluation use is enhanced.

Let's look a bit more closely at this notion of factors, which can be divided into three categories: human factors, context factors, and evaluation factors.

The first category, human factors, includes the characteristics of the evaluator, of the people connected with the project, and of any other potential users. For example, the evaluator, as a human being, has an individual set of personal characteristics, likes, and dislikes. Each of these characteristics can affect the evaluator's dealings with the other human beings involved in the evaluation. Similarly, the personal characteristics and preferences of the users interact with those of the evaluator within the evaluation setting. Among the many human factors that can influence evaluation use are people's attitudes toward evaluation, toward the evaluator, and toward the project; and the evaluator's rapport with the various user groups.

The second category, context factors, reflects the specific context in which the evaluation is conducted. Included here are such elements as fiscal constraints on the evaluation, the length of program operation, and the social/political climate surrounding the project.

The third category, evaluation factors, involves the evaluation itself. Included here are such elements as the evaluation procedures used, the kinds of information collected, and the way in which the information is reported.

We can illustrate each of the three categories of factors from our case-study examples.

> In the school district, the project director identifies specific issues for the evaluation to address. On the basis of this input, the evaluator designs procedures to gather the data needed to address these issues. This factor, termed "evaluation procedures," belongs to the third group of factors.
>
> In the medical center, the director of nursing education senses a defensive attitude on the part of the nursing educators with respect to the forthcoming evaluation. This attitude reflects the factor termed "attitude toward evaluation", which belongs to the first group.

In the bank, the limited fiscal resources for the evaluation lead the project administrator to concentrate on the information needs of the branch managers to the exclusion of other staff. This targeting of funds and energy reflects a contextual factor, "fiscal constraints".

In the infantry division, the project director recognizes that battle group commanders need to have a fair amount of tactical authority in order to use the evaluation information. This factor, "unit-level autonomy," belongs to the second category.

In the corporation, the project administrator tells the evaluator that the chief executive officer prefers reports that have a lot of graphics but relatively little text. Two factors are involved here: "user information-processing preferences," from the first category; and "format of report," from the third category.

Chapter III of this Guide includes a full description of all the individual factors in each of the three categories. For the present, it is sufficient that you recognize the variety of factors likely to be present within your own evaluation situation. We have identified each of these factors on the basis of our own research efforts and our synthesis of the literature on evaluation use. The literature synthesis appears in Appendix A.

When you organize for evaluation use, you will need to examine closely your relationship to each of the factors present in your evaluation situation. As an administrator, you can exert a certain amount of influence over how these factors are likely to affect the process and the outcome of the evaluation. Just how much influence you can exert may vary with each factor and with each individual situation you encounter during the course of the evaluation.

Let's take just one example of a human factor, the one we've termed "evaluator credibility." This factor involves the extent to which the users believe in the evaluator's competence and in the accuracy of the information he/she reports back to them. What can an administrator do to increase the evaluator's credibility?

One step that can be taken is to circulate to the potential users a summary of the evaluator's professional accomplishments, including perhaps samples of evaluation reports he/she has done. Another possible step is to hold an initial meeting with the evaluator and the potential users so that they can get to know one another better before the evaluation actually begins. A third possible action is to have past users of the evaluator's services communicate with the new client users. Thus, there are several things an administrator can do to exert a positive influence on users' perceptions of the evaluator's credibility.

It is important to recognize, however, that some factors are simply not amenable to attempts at positive influence. For example, an administrator can do little or nothing to change any external requirements imposed upon the evaluation by a funding agency.

Nonetheless, you should not be too ready to conclude that there is nothing you can do to influence a factor and thus increase the likelihood that the evaluation will be used. Rather, you must try to think creatively about each of the factors; such thinking may suggest a number of strategies that will prove valuable.

In the next chapter, we will define and discuss each of the factors which the administrator needs to consider. More specifically, we will point out the interrelationships among factors, the kinds of influence an administrator can exert over a given factor, and the ways in which an evaluation can be organized to take advantage of a given factor's potential positive effect on evaluation use.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS AFFECTING EVALUATION USE

In Chapter II we described evaluation use and briefly mentioned some of the factors affecting use. While Chapter II was primarily concerned with providing background to help you decide who will use the evaluation and how they might use it, this chapter will help you with the next decisions you must make: Which factors are likely to affect use in your project evaluation? and What can you do to make that effect positive?

There are three categories of factors you should consider.

- First, human factors: This category includes user and evaluator characteristics which might have an effect on use.
- Second, context factors: This category reflects the setting of the project being evaluated, including organizational and programmatic arrangements, and social and political climate.
- Third, evaluation factors: This category refers to the conduct of the actual evaluation, including its procedures, the information it collects, and how that information is reported.

Nature of Factor Influence

The factors discussed here were identified from our synthesis of the evaluation use literature (including our own research on evaluation use). The synthesis (Appendix A) collates various research findings and theories about factors affecting use and offers some reasons to explain why a given factor may work for or against use.

In this chapter we will describe the factors more fully, talk about the effect they may have on use, and offer broad organizing tactics that you can use to create an atmosphere which will encourage use. Chapter IV provides information on more specific tactics you may adopt or adapt to promote actual use.

We'd like you to keep one important consideration in mind as you read the factor descriptions. Many of the factors in a given category are highly related and interact with each other. In the human category, for instance, the role an evaluator selects bears on how users react to him. In the context category, an evaluation's contractual requirements may determine the extent to which a project can raise its own evaluation questions and suggest ways to answer them. In the evaluation category, the frequency with which potential users get good information can affect their tendency to find such information relevant and appropriate.

In addition, a factor in one category may be associated with and affect a factor in another category. For example, a factor in the human category, such as the evaluator's political understanding of the project (human category) is associated with the kinds of information routinely used in a project (context category). Moreover, the evaluator's political understanding and his appreciation of information routines will have a bearing on his approach to factors in the evaluation category.

Depending on how these human, context, and evaluation factors work together, their combined effect on use may be positive or negative (or neutral, of course). For example, a politically sensitive evaluator who is aware of users' routines will be more likely to employ procedures that are appropriate to the job at hand and thus to provide information with potential for use.

Application to Your Setting

Some of these factors are positively related to use in most project settings. Others depend on the nature of the particular evaluation setting. One of your concerns in organizing an evaluation is to decide the current status of your project with respect to the various factors and to consider ways to modify that status in order to assure a greater likelihood of evaluation use.

The descriptions of the individual factors will give you a basis for comparing your setting with a given factor description. What the description says about the factor's relevance to use, and how your setting compares with the description, will help you decide where and how your influence may be needed.

For example, you may decide that there are some evaluator and user characteristics you must modify in order to promote use. Now, because of your administrative role in the project, you may readily see ways of influencing most users (especially those in your own project) but have some reticence about the extent of influence you might have on the evaluator. But remember, you are not trying to influence the findings of the evaluation. Rather, you are trying to act in ways that will make the evaluation potentially more usable. It is certainly appropriate to try to influence all of the actors in order to maximize potential use. It may be that the evaluator is already willing to do many of the things that help promote use. It may be that you and your colleagues are willing to work to promote evaluation use. On the other hand, some individuals may be less committed to use. If so, you may have to work hard with these individuals in organizing for evaluation use.

A popular song from another era sums up a central notion of organizing for evaluation use -- "accentuate the positive; eliminate the negative." The message pays off, so you might keep it in mind as you begin, first, with the human factors below.

HUMAN FACTORS

In this category, there are two classes of factors which can potentially affect evaluation use:

Evaluator Characteristics

User Characteristics.

-- INSERT 1 HERE --

The evaluator characteristics affecting use consist of:

- Commitment to use of evaluation results
- Willingness to involve user in the evaluation
- Choice of role
- Rapport with users
- Political sensitivity
- Credibility
- Background and identity

Let's consider each of these characteristics in turn.

-- INSERT 2 HERE --

The evaluator's commitment to use can have a strong bearing on the extent to which results are actually used. The results referred to here can be the results of data collection and analysis which are reported as findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The fact that they are reported to someone does not, however, guarantee that they will be used. But they are more likely to be used if the evaluator is personally committed to seeing his work used by someone. This commitment is seen in the amount of effort -- personal, technical, artistic, persuasive -- he gives to promoting the use of this work. Of all the evaluator characteristics, commitment may be the single most important determinant of use.

What evaluators feel toward and do about assuring the use of their evaluation says a lot about how they view their craft. Some evaluators, expert though they may be, believe that if they do a technically sound job, their work will be used. Other less expert evaluators have the same naive belief. Still others do not care if anyone uses their work. But most evaluators want their work to be of practical benefit.

A potential user's belief that evaluation results are sound helps to create an atmosphere conducive to use. And we would hope that any evaluator committed to use provides sound work. But something more is required. The evaluator must offer a tangible, visible, perhaps exemplary demonstration that he believes his work should be put to use.

The evaluator needs to show that he believes his work is useful and that he is willing to put it to use. After all, if people are expected to use evaluation, but at the same time the evaluator does no more than pass out "forms" to be completed and send back "data," response is apt to be less than enthusiastic. On the other hand, if the evaluator solicits potential users for their questions, gives them timely answers, makes himself available to staff members for discussions about progress, offers specific suggestions about how findings can be used, and so forth, then he is demonstrating his commitment to use and can expect to generate greater enthusiasm from potential users.

The research evidence shows that deliberate evaluator efforts to stimulate use tend to enhance evaluation use. These efforts should be guided by the interaction of factors in your setting, an interaction that should guide all efforts, yours and the evaluator's, to stimulate use.

As evaluation organizer, one of your first jobs is to find out how much the evaluator is committed to use and what he is willing to do to help promote use.

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One way to promote use is to involve potential users in the evaluation. This means that potential users can help to guide, formally or informally, the planning and conduct of the evaluation as well as its uses.

Evaluators differ in the extent to which they are willing to involve users in the evaluation. On the one hand, some evaluators who are less committed to use are also, as we'd expect, less concerned about user involvement. If you have this kind of evaluator, you should try to get him to involve the users at the same time that you try to increase his commitment. In both cases, you are trying to get the evaluator to take more responsibility.

On the other hand, some evaluators strongly committed to use may not see user involvement as desirable, even though we'd expect the opposite. Why should this be so? For one thing, they may believe their sheer rhetorical or statistical persuasiveness will assure that their work is used.

For another, they may believe it is their exclusive professional responsibility to see that their work is used. What do you do with this kind of evaluator? First of all, you have to be careful. You must make sure the evaluator stays committed to use but shares the responsibility by involving his users. This can be a delicate situation. But unless it is resolved, the evaluator's work remains essentially a monologue. And such a monologue often goes unheeded.

To extend this analogy, a user may be seen as an audience or part of an audience, and an evaluator as a performer. Some performers are content if the audience buys a ticket, is reasonably polite, and clears the hall quickly. At best, this kind of performance evokes only a passive audience response.

Other performers feel they have not done what they were hired to do unless they involve their audience and elicit an active response to the performance. This kind of performer probably understands that his ability to generate an active response depends on the number of people in the audience, their similarities and differences, the larger community they represent, the political and social attitudes they bring to the hall, and so forth. This kind of performer emphasizes audience participation -- via empathy, identification, prompting -- in the performance. The principal element is a sharing between partners in the performance. The primary intention is to "read" the audience and to give them something that they can use as they reflect on the performance, relive and share it with others, perhaps apply the experience in some aspect of their lives.

We subscribe to the idea of an interactive evaluator-audience relationship, a relationship that demands involvement and dialogue growing from a shared experience, a relationship that stresses partnership to promote evaluation relevance and use.

Some evaluators, though certainly not all, share our view. They stress partnership, involvement, and dialogue in the interest of evaluation use. If you have or can find such an evaluator, your task of organizing for evaluation use will be that much easier.

Some evaluators, perhaps unwittingly, take the monologue approach to their work. They often seem to be talking to themselves or, at best, to another evaluator or researcher.

Other evaluators deliberately avoid audience involvement. This avoidance may stem from the "professionalism" just mentioned, the tendency to see the audience as naive amateurs who are incapable of understanding the subtleties of evaluation. Or it may stem from the conviction that it is unfair to ask already busy people to help the evaluator do what he is being paid to do. Other evaluators may believe that evaluator and audience should not work together because such collaboration will threaten the evaluation's "external objectivity." These evaluators may themselves believe that if users help in structuring their own evaluation, the results are necessarily suspect.

Our purpose here is to point out that an evaluator's beliefs about the desirability of user involvement depend on several considerations. And the causes of an evaluator's apprehensions about user involvement should determine your course of action. We have already mentioned some possible causes: lack of commitment to use; belief in the magical power of evaluation to persuade and so to be used; notions about "professionalism."

Now, what are your options for overcoming these various kinds of reservations? In the case of the "uncommitted evaluator," you can explain what kinds of questions you have, what your information needs are, and how and by whom the evaluation will be used. (You should do this regardless of the kind of evaluator you have.) You can point out that potential users will probably take their cue from the evaluator. That is, if he were to ask a potential user how the evaluation can help, he might hear something like: "Talk to me about what my questions are and what information I need to answer them. Get that to me when I need it, and I'll try to put it to use."

In the case of the "magician-evaluator," you can point out that for some people, statistics may jump out from the page, full of meaning and ready to be put to use. But not for most people. Most people will look for explanations, suggestions, and recommendations about where and how to use the findings.

In the case of the "evaluator-professional," you can point out your willingness to share the load, to assure that the information will be used. You can also point out that the users need to be similarly involved.

These suggestions grow from one of the important findings to emerge from research on the topic: namely, that evaluation use is enhanced if the evaluator actively involves potential users in his work. And this involvement requires, at the very least, a dialogue about the evaluation process and about how this process, and the information it generates, can be made useful.

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The role that the evaluator chooses, out of several possible roles, has an important bearing on the extent to which his work is used. His choice of a particular role will tell potential users a lot about his attitude toward his profession, toward the project, toward the people in it, and toward the people who exercise authority over it.

The evaluator's choice of role is closely related to the two factors just discussed: commitment to use and willingness to involve users in the evaluation. Indeed, both these characteristics can be viewed as elements or aspects of an evaluator's self-defined role.

There are many possible evaluator roles. One is that of the neutral, detached, and possibly aloof arbiter. While the evalutor may choose this role in the interest of providing an impartial evaluation, users may get a very different impression. In its most extreme form, this role evokes the image of the "hanging judge," who does not consider extenuating circumstances in his rulings.

Another common role is that of dedicated research scientist. The evaluator choosing this role is interested in running an "experiment," imposing a rigorous design, and testing hypotheses rather than answering project questions and meeting decision needs.

Yet another role is that of project advocate. The evaluator who chooses this role acts almost as a member of the project staff. He gives the impression that he will report nothing negative, for fear of offending, or hurting the project, or of not being rehired. Perhaps he will not even make concrete suggestions about ways to improve the project.

Perhaps the ideal evaluator role is that of the colleague who at the same time is willing to be constructively critical, who will work with the project staff to raise questions about the project, collect information, and analyze it in order to make honest and helpful recommendations about project practices. This role stresses evaluator-user collaboration.

Other evaluator roles may exist. But almost all the studies dealing with this factor agree that the last-mentioned role is most conducive to evaluation use.

That evaluators can adopt different roles and have different attitudes toward those roles is a fact that has implications for you as you organize the evaluation. When you talk with the evaluator about his orientation to use and user involvement, you should also discuss the role he will play and the desirability of his adopting a role that emphasized evaluator-user interaction and collaboration.

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The evaluator's ability to generate rapport with users depends on the degree of harmony, trust, and agreement that exists between them. Good rapport between evaluator and users is marked by a sympathetic relationship.

Rapport, and its elements of harmony and trust, can grow out of the evaluator's professional or personal approach to his craft, or both. The professional aspects bearing on rapport include the evaluator's showing concern for the needs of the project, making an effort to adopt procedures appropriate to the project setting, and making sure that user viewpoints are invited and included in the evaluation.

The personal and interpersonal aspects bearing on rapport can take several forms. For example, rapport is advanced by the evaluator's ability to demonstrate expertise without appearing aloof or haughty and by his accessibility. It is not enough that the evaluator be "available" to answer questions, interpret, and recommend. He should be available in such a way that users want to take advantage of his skills. Users should not feel that when they want to talk to the evaluator they must first remove their shoes because they are approaching the "presence."

As with the other factors, evaluators vary in their ability, and their desire, to establish rapport. But since research indicates that evaluator-user rapport also contributes to use, in your organizing work you should pay careful attention to this factor. Consider if there are ways in which you can "bring" the evaluator into the user group and help to establish rapport. Is there advice that you can provide to the evaluator?

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The potential for use is greatly increased if the evaluator has good political sensitivity. At least two major elements are involved in the evaluator's political sensitivity. First, he must understand the various aspects of the political context, both individual and organizational. A project involves individuals -- people who differ in beliefs, attitudes, openness, power. Further, projects have decision making roles and frequently exist within a larger organization and are subject to pressures within that sphere. Thus, in order to be effective the evaluator must understand the role of various important political ingredients such as: formal and informal sources of power, trusted opinion-makers, consensus versus dominance, the importance of tradition versus receptiveness to the new, and breadth and representativeness of the constituency.

Second, the evaluator must understand that information is only one of the ingredients in the recipe guiding a project. Decisions are made on other bases; attitudes are formed in other ways. Further, evaluation provides only one particular kind of information, a kind that may not be familiar to all potential users. Many sources of information are available to potential users beyond that provided by the evaluation.

Evaluators may differ in their ability to grasp the political nature of the project, for things political are difficult to gauge almost by definition. Evaluators, perhaps as a function of their view of the evaluation role, can also differ in their willingness to understand and apply political considerations in their work. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that the evaluator's ability to gain and apply such understanding contributes to use. Part of your organizing work, then, may involve convincing the evaluator of the importance of political sensitivity and helping him to gain an understanding of the political aspects of the project.

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If an evaluator is to be credible, potential users must regard him as competent, honest, and reliable. Credibility is a reflection of the amount of trust and confidence the evaluator inspires. This trust is in part determined by the various technical and professional capabilities the evaluators brings to the task. In part, also, evaluator credibility is associated with rapport, with personal approach to the work, to users and other factors.

For example, a highly qualified evaluator may acquire credibility because of his reputation for or demonstration of technical competence -- such as in statistics or research methodology. The technical competence associated with content-area expertise is also a source of credibility. An evaluator's credibility may also be enhanced because of his ability to provide timely, relevant information or his perceived reputation for honesty. Or, evaluators' credibility might be enhanced by personal and other characteristics such as presence and general demeanor or professional reputation.

Evaluators, then, can differ on the credibility they bring to an evaluation assignment. But, initial credibility status is modifiable. Our prior research has shown that one of the most striking features of evaluator credibility is the extent to which it may be acquired or enhanced during the conduct of the evaluation.

Thus, while an evaluator's credibility is an important consideration for the ultimate success of the evaluation, much can be done during the course of the evaluation to enhance credibility. And, you can contribute to helping the evaluator to take actions that will enhance credibility.

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Evaluator background and identity refer to characteristics such as age, gender, title or position, and so forth. The literature points out that such factors, in and of themselves, usually have a limited influence on use. We believe that it is not background and identity as such, but the way users react to these characteristics, that has a strong potential for affecting use.

Several considerations are involved here. Users may react to an evaluator in different ways depending on how he or she embodies their beliefs and preferences about age, gender, race, speech patterns, physical attributes, and so forth. Any of these may, depending on user reaction, have some effect on use potential. It is very likely that -- if compounded by poor role selection, rapport, political sensitivity, and credibility -- they will converge to have a marked effect on use.

The two background characteristics most frequently studied in research on evaluation use are gender and title or position.

Gender, per se, is unlikely to have a profound bearing on use, except in certain project circumstances. For instance, if users are judging unfamiliar material, or examining information from a subject area about which they have little knowledge, they might mask their own lack of understanding and disagreement with findings in the form of stereotypical responses. We don't think there is great frequency or likelihood of such occurrences but you ought to consider such possibilities in your own situations. You may, for example, need to prepare users for the information they will be receiving in order to provide a better context for understanding so that they will not rely on stereotypic explanations based on evaluator gender. (While there has been no specific evaluation use research related to other kinds of stereotyping, the same considerations may well apply.)

The person evaluating a project can have various titles or hold various designated positions: evaluator, researcher, monitor, consultant, and so forth. Depending on a user's prior experiences with an evaluator, external consultant, etc., the title or position of a given evaluator may bear on how his work is received. Should users be predisposed against a certain title, you may need to present the evaluator in some other way.

Again, title by itself probably has little effect on use, except in such circumstances as those described above for gender. Your primary organizing concern in connection with title and gender -- as well as other personal characteristics of evaluators -- is to minimize the extent to which users' expectations and prejudices will cause them to react negatively to the evaluator and because of that, to the evaluation.

On the basis of all of the above evaluator factor descriptions, there are a few questions you might keep in mind as you consider how to organize your evaluation.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

What are the characteristics of the evaluators you have worked with in the past, or may be working with now, compared with those described above?

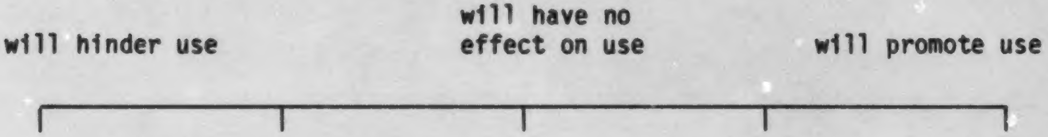
How do you and your colleagues, as potential users, stack up in terms of becoming active evaluation partners?

How difficult do you think it may be for an evaluator working with you to assume a project-sensitive role?

Would an evaluator of your project have difficulty understanding the political situation?

What evaluator personal characteristics would enhance or detract from credibility of your project?

As you consider these questions, and other relevant questions you yourself may pose, you may be helped by using a scale like the following. On each factor described above, try to pinpoint where an evaluator that you have worked with, or that you are working with, would fit on the scale. Where you are dissatisfied with a factor fit, consider what you might do to improve it.



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The user characteristics affecting evaluation use consist of:

- Identity
- Interest in the evaluation
- Commitment to use of evaluation results
- Professional style(s)
- Information-processing preference(s)

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Identification of users presents a logical starting point for beginning the examination of user characteristics. This factor includes a consideration of who are the various users, what are their organizational positions, and what are their professional experience levels. Let's examine each of these elements in turn.

An evaluation may often need to be directed towards multiple users, or groups of users. At the outset, you should provide the evaluator with a clear picture of who the potential users are and discuss how each might use the evaluation. Once the evaluator has a clear picture of the users, he is in a better position to decide on the best evaluation processes and techniques, and generate and report information which has a high potential for use.

The various users are likely to have differing organizational positions and levels of authority. Some of them may hold line or operational positions while others will have important support functions in the project. While many of the potential users will be found inside your project organization, others might be located in other agencies or even the community. It is up to you to give the evaluator relevant information on this point to help focus his attention. (In this handbook, we will focus primarily on the users within the project organization, but you will be able to easily extend our comments to other groups of users.)

You should also consider the professional experience levels of the potential users. For example, there will be differences in length of service with the organization, in the nature and length of the training that each of the users might have received, and in the amount of time they have been engaged in their professions or occupations. These differences have implications for your evaluation organizing. A person who has mastered the responsibilities of his present position may have a greater potential for using evaluation. Conversely, someone who is devoting all his energy to mastering a new job may find it difficult to devote any time to evaluation use, especially if such use is not related to his normal routine or not a part of his repertoire of prior experience.

There is some likelihood that those with the greatest involvement in the decisionmaking process, and those with the greatest experience in their positions, tend to be more critical of the evaluator and the evaluation than those with less decisionmaking authority and experience. This attitude may have several explanations. A person who has been making decisions for a good part of his professional life, without benefit of formal evaluation information, may feel no need for such information.

As evaluation organizer, one of your jobs is to help an evaluator to understand the characteristics of these potential users. Knowing who the users are, how they resemble or differ from one another, and where they stand on the various factors discussed in this section will help the evaluator in planning the evaluation and developing appropriate procedures and strategies.

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Like user identity, user interest in the evaluation has several components: views about the project being evaluated; expectations for the evaluation; predisposition towards evaluation; perceived need for the evaluation; and perceived risks of the evaluation. Each of these influences the extent of interest potential users will have in the evaluation.

Potential evaluation users can have different views about the project being evaluated, and these views -- consisting of attitudes toward, beliefs in, and expectations about the project -- can affect the use potential of the evaluation. For example, some users will be neutral, holding no particular brief for or against the project. Other potential users will have firm views, pro or con, about the project's value even before the evaluation takes place. Within this latter group there may be some individuals whose commitment to a particular view is so strong that they cannot modify it, regardless of what the evaluation shows. They will maintain their original position even if changes are warranted and beneficial to the project. Others may be more flexible, more willing to modify their initial views on a project in light of the evaluation findings.

In considering the view of the various users, you will need to make a number of decisions: Can you expect users with initially firm views to modify those views if warranted by evaluation findings? To what extent will their original views of the project affect their approach to evaluation use?

Users differ in their expectations for the evaluation -- what they consider that the evaluation will produce. Included in the expectations are the specific questions and concerns of the users and the levels of urgency attached to these.

Users outside the project may be expected to have different questions and concerns about the project from those who are part of the project staff. And, even potential users who work in the same project, or have similar responsibility within the project may have different questions and concerns about the project. Some potential users may be primarily concerned about the efficiency of the project's operations. Others may focus primarily on the kinds of effects the project is having. Still others may have questions about both areas. In addition, the questions and concerns that an uninformed evaluator regards as relevant may differ from those viewed as relevant by users familiar with the project. Early discussion of the range of possible questions and concerns, along with a frank airing of differences on these points, may prevent later misunderstandings and create an atmosphere conducive to use.

Users may attach different kinds and degrees of urgency to their questions and concerns. For some users, urgency involves the press of time; they want information quickly. For other users, urgency may refer to the gravity or importance of the situation; they believe that unless a specific question is answered and answered fully they cannot fulfill their responsibilities.

Expectations may be viewed by users in other ways. For example, some users may want to know how well they are doing their jobs. Others may want the evaluation to yield concrete recommendations they can apply to their present practices. Still others may expect that the evaluation will merely give the seal of approval to present project activities. The expectations of others may be vague; they only want the evaluation to encroach as little as possible on their time. In general, if evaluations do not match potential users' expectations, they are not likely to make use of them.

These differences in expectations are to be expected. Like other differences among users, they have ramifications for your organizing efforts. For example, if the evaluation entails only a few questions, the fact that they are all urgent need not create a problem. The evaluator, with your guidance, may be able to distribute his talent and energies among them. But many urgent questions, especially if they are spread across several different kinds of potential users may create a dilemma for you and the evaluator. And if it creates a dilemma for you and the evaluator, it is likely to create a dilemma for other users as well, who expect information matching the urgency they attach to the question.

If it seems impossible to respond equally to all urgent questions, you may have to consider reducing their number, perhaps by collapsing and combining some or by eliminating some, at least for the present time. Whether urgent questions are reduced in number or not, they can at least be prioritized.

In short, the evaluator will need to have a clear sense of the range of expectations. You may have to work actively with both the evaluator and the other users to clarify these expectations, emphasizing some while downplaying others. In short, you can set the tone for what the various users will expect from the evaluator -- modifying some views in the process -- and help the evaluator to better understand what exists.

Just as users can differ in their expectations, so they can differ in the predisposition -- the inclination or tendency for or against -- that they bring to the evaluation. Negative predispositions will undoubtedly inhibit use potential; thus, it is important to be aware of and attend to these predispositions. Likewise, the evaluator will want to be aware of and capitalize on positive predispositions.

For example, you will have to try to modify the position of those potential users who are disposed against evaluation. You may be helped in your efforts with those negatively disposed towards evaluation by finding out the reasons for this attitude. Some users may think that an evaluation looks only for faults. Others may have been hurt in some way by a previous evaluation. Others may think they will be asked to devote large chunks of their valuable time to the evaluation.

In the case of users who are favorably inclined toward evaluation in general, you must make sure that the particular evaluation is carried out in such a way as not to damage that inclination.

The use potential of an evaluation will be increased if users see a perceived need for the evaluation to be conducted. Thus, users may feel that the evaluation will help them to find out how well the project is doing and how they can improve their performance in and contributions to the project. Such users are likely to make use of the evaluation.

On the other hand, some users may see little or no need for an evaluation. They may think it is too soon in the life of the given project for evaluation, that the project should be allowed to develop more before it is conducted. Or they may think it is always too soon, that the money and time could be put to better use in other activities.

Again, differences in perceived need for the evaluation can lead to different use potentials. The kind of suggestions just offered with respect to predisposition may also be helpful in considering ways of improving prospects for use related to the perceived needs of users.

Just as users can differ on their views of the perceived need for the evaluation, so they can differ on the perceived risks they associate with the evaluation. Indeed, the two are related. For example, some users may fear that negative findings can threaten their jobs or chances for promotion. Others may fear that evaluation recommendations will lead to broad and sweeping changes that will increase their workload. Still others may fear comparison with their peers.

Perceived risk can influence the extent to which people are likely to use the evaluation. Given its possible effect on use, your organizing efforts should address the question of risk. One of the first things you might do is to consider whether you yourself associate any risks with the evaluation. If you do feel a sense of risk and if you somehow convey that sense to other users, there is a good chance, for reasons mentioned earlier, that they will also feel threatened. Conversely, if you project the attitude any possible risk is offset by potential benefits, they will take this cue from you.

The perceived risk may be overstated. It may be unlikely that the evaluation, in and of itself, will result in the kinds of profound changes that people fear. Perhaps all you have to do is take appropriate steps to make sure that possible fears are not realized. For example, you should not allow the evaluation to provide only a one-time, end-of-project report, even if you expect positive results. One important contribution of evaluation is to pinpoint trouble spots as they emerge, before they become so severe they cannot be dealt with. If the users are aware of this evaluation focus, their anxieties can be minimized.

On the other hand, an evaluation may entail some real risks: for instance, the possibility that the project will not be refunded. Where such risks exist, you should acknowledge them and discuss the possible range of outcomes. And you should again "accentuate the positive," examining the options that face you.

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We already pointed out that evaluators' commitment to use is one of the single most important factors affecting use, and it isn't surprising that the same holds true with respect to users. No matter how much the evaluator is committed to use, if that same commitment is not shared by intended users, then the potential for use diminishes sharply. This notion harks back to the metaphor of evaluator and user participating in the same performance.

Clearly, we believe that the stronger the interest in the evaluation, the greater the likelihood that users will be committed to using the results or benefitting from the process. Thus, perhaps the best way to increase commitment is to assure that the evaluation is conducted in a way that addresses expected issues, by your minimizing risks and the like. In some instances, however, there may be other things you can do in promoting commitment to use as part of your organizing work.

Potential users are more apt to become actual users if key decision-makers and important others visibly show their support for and active commitment to use. Thus, it is particularly important to obtain commitment from those who hold titular power and authority or who occupy a trusted position within the user group (with or without formal authority) or who are known for taking the initiative, assuming responsibility, "making things happen." The tangible commitment of key users has been shown to stimulate the potential for use, though it by no means guarantees that evaluation will actually be used.

Let's return to the metaphor of evaluator as performer. Assume that the evaluator has developed a rapport and active involvement with most of the users in the audience. They are beginning to get something from his work and may be thinking about ways to put it to use. But there are "holdouts" in the audience, people who are not caught up in the performance, who may even belittle the evaluator and his work. If these "holdouts" are key personnel whom others trust and respect, they may have a dampening effect on the whole audience. Others in lesser positions may take their cues from the key personnel and adopt a similar attitude, out of fear, out of a belief that the holder of the negative viewpoint is smarter than they are, or out of a desire to maintain harmony. Whatever the reasons, their own enthusiasm and commitment will be blunted.

Therefore, as you consider how to organize the evaluation, you should give prominent attention to the question of how to commit key personnel to use. You should start by exerting your own influence on this potentially valuable group of key people.

Where there is no commitment to use, and where suggestions such as the above do not pay off, then you may need to consider whether it is worth doing the evaluation. If you have the authority, you should perhaps postpone the evaluation until such time as you can elicit some commitment to use.

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Professional style of users -- the skills and attributes associated with the way they conduct their work -- will be considered next. Several aspects of professional style to be considered are: administrative and organizational skills, initiative, and openness to new ideas or change.

Potential users can differ in their administrative and organizational skills. For example, you may have the ability to get things started and to follow through and get them done. But some of your fellow administrators, who are potential users, may be perpetual procrastinators or otherwise unable to get tasks finished. Too much of this behavior may have a negative effect on the use potential you are trying to build.

Similarly, other users differ in their ability to organize their time to promote use. If evaluation use, as defined here, is a new responsibility for some, you should ask your more experienced colleagues how they plan to organize their time so that evaluation use gets attention. Their plans can then be shared with others. You will need to follow through to help colleague users in following through.

While user initiative is in some ways part of administrative and organizational skills, we view it as sufficiently important and different to consider separately. Initiative includes the ability to take the first step, to grasp and develop a new idea or method. While always a desirable attribute, this ability takes on an added value as regards use. If the evaluator is actively promoting use in a particular project, then user initiative is a welcome complement. Whenever evaluator promotion of use is less than adequate, project level initiative assumes great importance.

Users' openness to new ideas or change can have a strong effect on evaluation use. How users stand with respect to any new idea or change may determine their stance toward evaluation in particular. For instance, some users may cling to tradition and may resist innovation and change. Others may eagerly seek -- or at least accept and apply -- the new and different. Others may take some postion between these two extremes, withholding judgment until they can make a decision based on experience.

Evaluation may be part of the professional repertoire of some users. For others it may be something new and different. Within this latter group, some may welcome the new experience; others may actively resist it; others may adopt a "wait and see" attitude. Again, discussions involving the evaluator, you and other potential users will be important here. As the evaluator and the various users get a sense of any differences that exist, the ground is being prepared for evaluation use.

The organizing tactics previously outlined can pay off here; giving potential users an orientation to evaluation, clarifying the nature of evaluator-user relationships, discussing risks frankly, and enlisting the aid of peer-allies may all help to increase the likelihood of evaluation use.

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Information processing preference refers, first, to a user's preference for particular forms of information. One user may feel his questions are best answered by very fine-grained information, while another may want a broader sweep. Within these large differences, some users may prefer narrative descriptions; others, statistical presentations; and still others, a combination of the two. Again, you will need to help the evaluator develop a sense of how particular users' questions might best be answered, and you may need to work with other users to discuss preferences, modify preferences, negotiate possible confìcts, and so forth.

Second, users can differ on how they process information. Some groups may be used to receiving reports which they can study in private. Others may be disposed to information which is first presented orally and then summarized in written form. Other users may prefer that an individual representing their group first receives the information and then shares it with colleagues.

In short, users may differ markedly in their preferences regarding the form that information takes and the way in which it is transmitted. And research shows that unless the evaluation recognizes and builds on these preferences and routines, the use potential may be hampered.

You can organize for this factor by setting up opportunities for the evaluator, you, and other users to discuss styles and preferences and to develop consensus. These discussions, incidentally, can serve another purpose. They may uncover previously unknown facts about how project staff members feel about other things, how they prefer to do other things. Administrative action based on these feelings and preferences not only helps prepare for evaluation use but also leads to improvements in overall project operation.

These are a few questions relating to the user factor descriptions provided above that you might consider as you organize for evaluation.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Will your users' organizational positions and experience levels have a good or bad influence on use?

How do your various users/user groups differ regarding their levels of interest in the evaluation?

How strong a role will you need to take to promote commitment to and actual use of the evaluation?

Will your users' interest levels, skills, initiative, and openness tend to help or hinder use?

How difficult will it be for you to provide the evaluator with a sense of users' information preferences and processing styles?

As you consider these questions, you may want to refer to the scale previously provided. Try to determine if the factor, as presently manifested among potential users and user groups,

will hinder use	will have no effect on use	will promote use

Now, consider any factor which you think will hinder use: What ideas come to mind for influencing that factor to make it work for use?

Context Factors

In the context category of factors potentially affecting evaluation use, there are three broad classes:

Preexisting Evaluation Bounds

Organizational Characteristics

Program Characteristics

As was the case with the human factors, there are some context factors you may need to influence to help promote evaluation use.

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Preexisting evaluation bounds refer to events which may have taken place, and to important decisions that may have been made, which set possible constraints on the evaluation. The three factors in this category are:

Written requirements

Other contractual obligations

Fiscal constraints

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Written requirements include legal codes, federal/state requirements, institutional operating policy, and specific requirements set at the unit being evaluated. If these requirements permit some flexibility in tailoring the evaluation, or part of the evaluation, to the project, the potential for use increases.

You, the evaluator, and other users should discuss the range of requirements. First, you should think about the best ways to meet them. Second, you should see whether external requirements conflict with specific project needs. If so, it is critical that you try to resolve these potential conflicts. Again, you may need to negotiate among the sources of the various requirements. If an evaluation tries to be all things to all masters, its use potential is severely threatened. Ideally, you, the evaluator, and other users (including external users) should be able to resolve any possible conflicts over requirements. And what could some of these conflicts look like?

Quite often, the conflict is less a matter of disagreement about what the evaluation should provide and where it should go, and more a matter of how it should get there and what it should do on the way. Another song comes to mind here. You and other users might agree that the evaluator should meet you in Scotland and give a report on his journey. But one important external user wants the evaluator to take the low road, perhaps because he thinks it the most direct route. You want the evaluator to take the high road, perhaps because you think he'll have a more interesting and enlightening journey.

Now, with no better directions than that, what can the evaluator do? He may follow one set of directions and satisfy one user while disappointing the other. He may take one path part of the way, then switch to the other, and later return to the original. If you're lucky, he may send you a postcard from Loch Ness saying he's stopped for a few days to look for the monster. Thus, by the time the evaluator arrives at his destination, both users have packed up and headed for home.

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Other contractual obligations, in addition to the written requirements noted above, can be set by project administrative and operational users. If handled properly, these locally generated requirements can enhance use, by providing a user-oriented focus and direction for the evaluation.

Initially, however, project-level obligations may be unrealistic or overambitious. Further, they may create tension for the evaluator, who is also trying to meet the written requirements. Discussion of this potential problem should aim at producing a manageable set of requirements. You might set project-level obligations in such a way that the evaluator answers particular questions for specific users. Evaluator-user discussion of these questions can have a positive effect on use by helping users to define their needs and expectations and the evaluator to select the most appropriate role.

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Fiscal constraints -- i.e., the amount of money set aside for the evaluation -- can affect an evaluation in a variety of ways. For example, the time the evaluator spends on a project, the measures he develops or selects, and his information reporting procedures are all affected by fiscal constraints. These constraints, therefore, have a bearing on the kind of role he selects. But while you should pay attention to fiscal resources, they need not, in and of themselves, seriously impede evaluation use, unless the problem is so severe that it gets in the way of real attempts to meet project needs.

The first thing you should do is to discuss with the evaluator how much of his time will be taken up by various questions, needs, expectations, etc. After converting this time index to dollars, you may find that your own and other users' expectations have to be modified. The second thing you can do, if you want to answer more questions than money will permit, is to look for "cost-free" alternatives. You, the evaluator, and other users may be able to come up with ways for using project personnel to perform some evaluation tasks: collecting and recording data, for example. Such alternative strategies may substantially reduce the evaluator's time-dollar commitment.

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The organizational characteristics potentially affecting evaluation use may be examined in two groupings:

Intraorganizational features

External features

The factors in this group reflect patterns and relationships both within and outside of the organization that may affect use. Some of the intraorganizational features have already been touched on in the section on user characteristics.

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Intraorganizational features refer mainly to established characteristics and relationships of the organizational unit to which the program being evaluated belongs. Examples of such features are the role of the governing agency, the relationship between the program's unit and the governing agency and the unit's degree of autonomy.

Put simply, the unit with which the evaluator is working is likely to have a past history which can affect both the conduct of the evaluation itself and the potential for use. There may be little the evaluator can do to alter these past patterns of interrelationship; however, understanding how they are likely to impact on the present evaluation is important to responding to the needs and attitudes of potential users, to plans for conducting the evaluation, and to the likelihood of evaluation use.

Let's take a closer look at what some of the intraorganizational features can mean to an evaluation. One example might be the case where a project's governing agency generally supplies support services such as consultants, in-house expertise, and the like. Such an agency would also be likely to select the evaluator for the program. This situation will have definite implications for the evaluation organizer in terms of the evaluator's credibility, how the evaluator's personal characteristics and operational style are likely to complement those of the project staff and the potential users, and the ultimate likelihood of evaluation use.

A second example might be the degree of autonomy exercised by the project. An evaluator who must conform to expectations and requirements set by a higher authority within the organization may have correspondingly less opportunity to respond to the particular concerns and needs of the program itself. Unit autonomy is more likely to provide the organizer, evaluator and potential users a greater degree of freedom to decide how to conduct the evaluation and to use its results. Your concern as evaluation organizer is to determine the extent to which lack of autonomy might inhibit the evaluation's usefulness -- perhaps this is a negotiable item for a new evaluation.

Finally, where institutional risks are real, they should be dealt with openly and the possible outcomes of the evaluation should be discussed.

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The external features refer to the context outside of the actual project. Included in this factor are such elements as the community climate, the community influence, and the role of other agencies.

Some projects operate within the larger community; for example, a specialized medical clinic, or a sports program like Little League. The community where such a project is located may be supportive, neutral or hostile to the presence of the project. We refer to this community attitude toward the project as the community climate. Often, the community will translate its attitude through attempts at influencing the operation or the funding of the project. For example, parents supportive of a bilingual education program may attend community advisory council meetings, may volunteer their support by speaking in favor of the project's continuation, may work as teacher aides, and may sign letters of support to be submitted with the project's application for renewal of funding.

Evaluation can be used to provide the community with evidence for continuing to support the project. Thus, in your efforts to promote evaluation use, you need to identify those members of the community who have a stake in the project being evaluated, and try to involve them in the evaluation as much as possible.

In addition to the community's relationship with the project, there may also be an external agency, governmental or otherwise, with a stake in the project. We have already seen an example where an external funding agency has set criteria for the evaluation to satisfy. Some outside agencies may continue to try to influence the conduct of the evaluation as it progresses by changing or modifying some of the original requirements. To the extent that these modifications influence the kinds of information to be collected during the evaluation, they can affect the potential for evaluation use. You may need to urge the agency to reconsider its position if you feel the effect of such changes will reflect negatively on the potential for evaluation use.

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Many program characteristics can affect evaluation use: the size and scope of the project; its content, including topic and emphasis; the number of people it serves; the way in which they are selected; and so forth. However, the kind or extent of effects that each might have on use is not clear.

The three program charcteristics on which there is greater clarity and which have been found to affect use are: Age/maturity, Innovativeness, and Overlap with other projects. We will first define each of these characteristics and then discuss how all of them, working together, may affect use.

Age and maturity are different entities. The age of a project refers to how long it has been in operation: Is the project brand-new? Has it been in operation long enough for some shaking-down to have occurred? Has it been operating long enough for staff to be routinely performing their jobs? For some of its goals to be accomplished? Project maturity reflects the extent to which project procedures and expectations are institutionalized. A project's age may or may not be related to its maturity, depending on how maturity is manifested.

Project innovativeness can also take several forms. An innovative project may be one that embodies something new, or something creative, or something unique, or something with an element of risk attached. Innovation should be viewed against normal project routine. If something is added to the project that is a marked departure from the routine, then the people operating the project are likely to see it as at least somewhat innovative, even though the addition may not meet the strict definition of innovation.

Project overlap takes three different forms, each of which has different implications for your organizing work. The first is the extent to which a project is part of a larger systemwide or programmatic effort.

The second form is the relationship between one project and others in the system that are not programmatically related. The third is the project's relationship to similar projects outside the system.

One dominant strand, with strong implications for your organizing activities, links these three program factors -- age/maturity, innovativeness, and overlap -- in terms of their effect on use. That is, if the evaluation is to have potential for use, it must be geared to the needs of the particular project. These needs may differ based on the program characteristics.

Thus, for example, a new project often needs the benefit of formative evaluation to help monitor progress and modify practice. An older, perhaps more mature, project might benefit from formative evaluation but may be primarily stand in need of summative information showing overall levels of success. Any information mismatch, especially in the case of a young project receiving only summative information, will probably have a negative effect on use.

By way of further example, projects linked programmatically with other projects may be subject to simultaneous evaluations. If the individual project receives information which paints only the overall picture, then project-level potential for use diminishes. The individual project will be looking for fine-grained information which it can use for its own internal purposes. Furthermore, a sense of competition is common among projects linked in some larger effort. In this case, the credibility of the evaluator is critical, since the project wants to be sure that it receives a fair and accurate portrayal.

As you organize for the three program-related factors, you will need to consider your project's characteristics on these dimensions. Your major concern is to make sure that you, the evaluator, and the other users agree on how a given project should be characterized and what implications that might have for the evaluation procedures.

Drawing on the above context factor descriptions, here are a few questions that may help with your organizing-for-use activities.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Are the preexisting bounds such that there may be conflict between project expectations and external requirements?

Is your own authority such that you can ensure that the evaluation, or part of the evaluation, will address project needs and questions?

Do you think an evaluator might have difficulty presenting his findings so as to be compatible with routine organizational information patterns?

To what extent will you have to consider community needs as part of the project evaluation?

How would you characterize your project and its evaluation needs with respect to age/maturity, innovativeness, and overlap?

Once again, as you consider the individual factors suggested in the above kinds of questions, does it appear that a given factor

will hinder use

will have no effect on use

will promote use

How can you influence any negative factors to make them, if not supportive of use, at least neutral?

EVALUATION FACTORS

In previous sections we have examined factor grouping dealing with the personal characteristics of the various individuals engaged in the evaluation and its use (human factors) and that cluster of factors relating to the organizational, contractual and fiscal bounds influencing the evaluation (context factors). We now turn to the "Evaluation Factors" -- those factors dealing with the conduct and reporting of the evaluation.

Four classes of evaluation factors may affect use:

Information Dialogue
Substance of Evaluation Information
Evaluation Reporting
Evaluation Procedures

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An information dialogue is the purposeful, guided sharing of ideas and opinions, between evaluator and users, about how to conduct the evaluation to promote its use. This dialogue is purposeful because its intention is to influence an evaluation's conduct to enhance its use potential. It is guided because evolving tactics to promote use are informed by a careful consideration of those factors which, in the given situation, may affect use.

The interaction which makes up the dialogue should take whatever forms are appropriate to the situation: formal/informal conversations; meetings; or written communications.

The success of such information dialogue is determined primarily by the amount and quality of the interaction that takes place between evaluator and users.

Once again, the metaphor of evaluation as performance has implications for your organizing efforts. That is, we believe that the most rewarding evaluation is one in which the evaluator's performance is guided by the users in his audience. The evaluator has to ascertain user needs and conduct himself and his work accordingly. But it is a two-way street. Users have to voice their needs. They must be actively involved in the performance -- interacting -- so that the evaluator can adopt procedures and provide information reflecting specified user needs.

Both the amount and the quality of interaction are important. The amount of evaluation-user interaction can have a strong influence on use and the earlier that interaction begins, the greater its influence. Interaction includes a broad range of encounters between evaluator and users: making formal and informal reports, making and taking phone calls, requesting clarification, explaining information. sharing a draft before it is finalized, discussing evaluation progress over lunch. These encounters can be initiated by the users as well as by the evaluator.

The quality of evaluator-user interaction can also affect use; numerous contacts, of themselves, are not enough. Each of the interactions should have certain qualities. First, the atmosphere in which they are conducted must be collegial and reciprocal. For example, a discussion of progress in which the evaluator does all the talking is probably not desirable. But a discussion where users feel comfortable about asking questions and the evaluator feels comfortable about giving answers -- even though they may be tentative -- exemplifies the proper atmosphere.

Second, the gist of the report, the phone call, the discussion must be based on sound evaluation practice and tempered by the users' needs for and orientation to different kinds of information.

As you consider how to organize to ensure sufficient and useful evaluator-user interaction, then, you must take into consideration the evaluator's role and views about use, and the users' questions, needs, and expectations. You must also remember that a one-shot interaction probably will not promote use. The dialogue should be an ongoing effort. For instance, you or another user might read a draft interim report and then suggest ways in which the evaluator could develop graphic data displays for other potential users. Or the evaluator might spend time with you or other users analyzing findings, interpreting their meaning, and developing realistic recommendations.

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Another category deals with the substance or nature of the evaluation information which is reported.

Two evaluation substance factors have been shown to influence use. They are:

Information relevance

Information specificity

In some respects, organizing for these factors means making sure that the general considerations related to quantity and quality are kept in mind.

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Information can be regarded as relevant if it is pertinent to users, if it bears directly on their issues of concern, if it is to the point. These characteristics must be judged from the point of view of the intended user(s). For a given user, relevance will often be a function of his views about the project, the questions he has, and the urgency he attaches to them. Therefore, an ongoing dialogue is critical in helping the evaluator to understand the nature of user questions and to address them pertinently and directly.

There are several potential trouble spots here. First, if too many questions are asked of the evaluation, it may be difficult to collect and provide relevant information on all of them. Perhaps the number of questions can be reduced. If not, you should be aware that the evaluation will probably provide only broad and general information.

Second, the evaluation questions may be too narrowly conceived -- requiring only the most perfunctory of answers. If potential users find such answers relevant, well and good. But they will probably want something more. In this situation, you may have to help reconceptualize and restate questions so that they require more than routine responses.

Third, the evaluation questions may be too broadly conceived, so general that a variety of information types and answers could be deemed relevant. Again, such questions will probably need to be reconceptualized and rephrased.

In your organizing work, then, you may need to negotiate and modify the range of questions asked of the evaluation: by reducing the number of questions, prioritizing questions, broadening the focus of narrow questions, and sharpening the focus of general questions. The point of this effort is to make sure that users' questions can be answered in a way that is relevant to them, that the evaluator understands what kinds of information are relevant to what kinds of users, that users are aware of the priorities attached to various questions, and that the information provided has the potential for use.

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Having decided what general features of relevance are important, you must next think about what specific kinds of information should be provided to various users. Now, two different users, or user groups, may share a common question and a common information need. But even so, they will look for different information specific to their particular jobs and responsibilities. For example, users with operational responsibilities may need fine-grained information to help them with their daily activities, whereas users with administrative responsibilities in several areas may need information of a more general nature or of a comparative nature.

The point is clear. Questions that are unique to one user or user-group require an answer specific to that question. Questions that are shared by several different users or user-groups probably require evaluative information at a level which differs for each group.

Research shows that the more the information is specifically selected and focused toward the needs of a particular user, the higher the potential for use. Therefore, the specificity issue has the same kind of organizing implications as were pointed out for relevance -- you may need to help the evaluator to understand the information specificity required by each of the potential users.

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We now consider a group of factors dealing with the reporting of evaluation information.

Evaluation reporting has been defined as consisting of five factors. They are:

Frequency of information provided

Timing of information

Format of presentations

Format of report

Statistical/narrative data

Each of these factors contributes to the quality of ongoing dialogue. As we discuss them, keep in mind that, in your organizing efforts, you should be concerned equally with the technical quality of the report in addition to its appropriateness for the particular context or setting. Since the five factors are closely related, we will first describe each factor and then discuss the implications of all five for your evaluation organizing.

The frequency of information provided bears some relation to amount of interaction between evaluator and users. "Frequency" here, however, refers specifically to the extent to which written or verbal evaluation information is reported to users throughout the life of a project.

This factor may have a strong bearing on use. Although the effect on use of a final, formal evaluation report is difficult to gauge, research suggests that timely and well-focused formative or progress reports increase the potential for use.

The timing of information -- that is when it is provided, whether in written or oral form -- can affect use potential. Reports that are issued at times which do not mesh with key project events and decision needs obviously cannot be used; for example, a report that arrives too late to help in making a certain decision. Further, the late submission of one report creates a mind-set among users, who may decide to ignore subsequent reports, even if they arrive on time.

In addition, well-timed progress or interim reports, oral or written, can provide partial answers to users' questions over time, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will anticipate and apply subsequent information, and helping to convince users of the evaluator's overall credibility.

While evaluation information can be presented in either oral or written form, each type of presentation makes its own unique demands. To be effective, an oral presentation requires a balance of formal and informal delivery style. For example, at the end of a formal prepared presentation of findings, the evaluator may informally amplify a point or two. He may ask for questions and respond informally. He may interrupt a lengthy presentation at some logical point to open the discussion to his audience. Research shows this mix of the formal and the informal enhances the effectiveness of oral presentations and increases likelihood that the information it presents will be used.

Like oral presentations, written presentations such as progress reports and final reports require an appropriate format to be effective. The "format" of a written report refers to its visual features, independent of its content. As with other factors already described, "appropriateness" is a function of user needs and preferences.

Research shows that a balanced mix of graphics (tables, charts, figures), technical presentation, and nontechnical narrative can enhance the use potential of written reports.

Evaluation information is usually presented in both statistical (tabular) and narrative form. Some presentations, oral or written, overemphasize one to the neglect of the other. Statistical and narrative data should complement each other as findings are presented and interpreted.

We have found that when an evaluation report is overloaded with statistical data, the potential for use diminishes. But when such data are supplemented by narrative exposition (interpretation of findings, formulation of recommendations), the potential for use increases. Also, when interpretation is not substantiated by statistical data, a report loses credibility and has a weakened potential for use. Conversely, interpretation and recommendations which are supported by appropriate data tend to increase the use potential.

Each of the five factors described above -- frequency, timing, format of oral presentations, format of written reports and statistical/narrative data -- should be considered in your organizing activities. For example, what does "frequent" mean? For one potential user it may mean getting information at the beginning of the project, at some mid-point, and toward the end. Another user may regard anything less than a monthly updating as infrequent. For some users, monthly communications may reach the point of overload and end up being "filed" and ignored as quickly as possible. Simply talking to users about this issue is probably the best way to determine frequency levels. You should talk to the evaluator to be sure that he understands the information frequency needs of various users. Bear in mind that his commitment to use and his orientation toward user involvement, along with the fiscal resources available to him, can have a bearing on how often information is provided.

Timing can be planned in a variety of ways. Obviously, if you report to some external authority which expects reports by a certain date, reports should be there by that date. On the other hand, it might be better to send review drafts to these authorities in enough time to receive their comments and feedback and to respond to them in the final report. If they are potential users of the information, not just report readers, involving them in the preparation of the report may stimulate use.

Other users, such as project staff and project and central office administrators, should be given the opportunity to help plan the timing of oral and written presentations. For example, they should be asked when they will need information on a specific question so they can apply it to a decision or problem. If this advice can't be obtained, and if you know enough about the various users and their needs, you might work with the evaluator to set timing by anticipating when the information is needed and working back from that date to provide sufficient lead time.

Though we mentioned earlier that oral presentations are most effective when they combine formal and informal features, that generalization may be too broad. When you discuss this matter with the evaluator, you should be guided by what you know about the preferences of the users who will come to the presentation. If you feel that a formal style is more appropriate to the audience than an informal style, or vice versa, you should make that clear to the evaluator.

As to the need for a statistical and narrative mix in oral and written presentations, and for format variety in written reports, the only possible problem you are apt to encounter is that the evaluator will have a different opinion. An evaluator who takes a project-serving role,

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who is committed to use, and who values user involvement will probably welcome your suggestions about balance in content and variety in format. In other cases, you may have to sell these ideas to the evaluator. Whether you should use a hard-sell or soft-sell approach depends on your authority over the evaluator.

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The evaluation procedures that may affect use are:

Methods

Handling of mandated tasks

Use of a general model

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The methods selected for an evaluation may be considered both in terms of their appropriateness and their rigor. Appropriateness -- the suitability of a particular evaluation method for a particular evaluation purpose -- has two aspects.

The first is the question of methodological appropriateness. For example, an evaluation may plan to use a certain measure to collect data on a given point. The question here is whether the method as method is suitable. If the proposed measure is an interview, then you must ask if an interview is the most appropriate means of answering the intended question. If the proposed measure is a questionnaire or rating scale or paper-and-pencil test, the same test applies: Is the proposed measure the most appropriate for the intended purpose?

The second is the question of context appropriateness. Is the proposed measure appropriate in the particular project context? For example, it may be that a given question can be answered equally well by a questionnaire or an interview. If one measure seems more user-appropriate than the other in a given setting, then it should be used (unless fiscal constraints apply and cannot be offset in some way).

When you organize for methodological rigor, your major concern is precision and accuracy. You want information that is as mistake-free as possible. Like appropriateness, rigor should be considered from a dual standpoint, because qualities such as accuracy can be gauged by two yardsticks.

First, there is the kind of rigor expected of good evaluation practice. For example, rigor demands that, if a formal interview is to be conducted as part of an evaluation, minimal criteria must be applied to assure accuracy. Each interviewer must follow the same procedures. All interviewers should ask the core questions in the same way. If interviewers are to capitalize on opportunities to explore core responses in more detail, they should all do so in the same way. This means the interview guides should include a set of probe questions as well as specific instructions on when and how to use them. Further, each interviewer must record the responses in the same way, and the method of data analysis must be suitable to the evaluation question and to the information collected on it.

Second, beyond professional measures of rigor, there is user perception of rigor. In judging rigor, users may ask whether the evaluator did what he said he would do, or whether a particular measure was used with care. For example, the evaluation plan may call for hiring part-time staff to administer an interview. Will users see this as rigorous administration? What if the part-time staff consists of graduate students from the local university? Users may feel that rigorous application demands that the interview be administered by the evaluator or by project staff sensitive to the institutional setting. To paraphrase a famous dictum about justice: Rigor must not only be done but must be seen to be done.

Research shows that appropriateness and rigor can have a bearing on use. Dialogue between the evaluator, you, and other users should help to assure consensus on what measures are most appropriate and rigorous in both a technical and a context sense. It is all too easy to get blown out of the water because the data from a perfectly sound measure are challenged on the grounds that the measure was used in a way which was inappropriate to the setting.

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The extent to which an evaluation deals with its mandated tasks, and the manner in which it deals with them, may have a bearing on project-level use. As we saw earlier, some mandates and requirements may be imposed by agencies outside the project being evaluated. Other obligations may originate from within the project. If the evaluation overemphasizes, or is perceived to overemphasize, externally mandated tasks, project use may be threatened. On the other hand, the external agency may be one of the potential evaluation users. If the agency believes that the evaluation is overly focused on project needs, then potential for external use may diminish.

We have already noted that the evaluator who tries to "serve too many masters" may experience role conflicts, which serve no one very well. Again, your organizing role is critical here. By setting up opportunities for you, the evaluator, and other users to share in an early and continuing dialogue about how best to handle various mandated tasks, you are helping to ensure that no one task or set of tasks is overemphasized. You are helping to ensure that the number and range of tasks can be managed and answered. You are helping to ensure that the people who set the tasks, and who want answers to their questions, will get information they can put to use.

-- INSERT 40 HERE --

"Model," as used in a research context, usually refers to beliefs about, philosophy governing, intentions behind manner of conducting, and the product of something such as evaluation. Generally, evaluators will structure activities differently dependent upon which model they subscribe to. There are various models that may be used to guide an evaluation. While it is not necessary for you to know or learn about them, the following represents a sample of the more prevalent models or approaches: CIPP, CSE model, Responsive Evaluation, Goal-free Evaluation, Adversary Evaluation, Connoiseur approach. Some evaluation models are unnamed and simply grow out of a belief that good evaluation is synonymous with good research.

Our point here is not to advocate one evaluation model or approach over another. But the models mentioned (and many others) are out there, and the implication for you is quite clear. One evaluator may prefer one approach over another. Indeed, he may insist on one approach over another and may try to use it in virtually all situations; you and your project may not fit his predilection and this will possibly have disastrous consequences for evaluation use.

You may get an evaluator who tries to convince you that one particular approach is necessarily "better" or "more accurate" or "more scientific" than another. Or you may get an evaluator who tells you that some formal model has to be followed.

But, if you are concerned about the evaluation having impact, the research literature doesn't support either position. Following a formal model does not necessarily enhance use potential. In this sense, no model is inherently better than another. Use potential will increase, however, when the evaluation uses methods that are technically appropriate and user-sensitive and when it offers the kind of informed balance we have spoken about in this chapter. In addition, the role that the evaluator chooses has a greater bearing on the use potential of his "approach" than any other single factor. (In a sense, you may want to consider these suggestions and the approach embedded in this book as a "user oriented model.")

In organizing for evaluation use along the lines we've suggested, you cannot allow the evaluation to be anything less than a tool for satisfying the information needs of your intended users. You should make sure that the evaluator has a thorough understanding of your definition of use, as well as a detailed description of your users and their needs. Anything less than a harmonious match between the two can have a bad effect on the use potential of an evaluation.

Here are some questions, drawn from the preceding factor descriptions, which you can refer to as you organize for use.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Have you arrived at firm or tentative answers to the questions asked at the end of the sections on human and context factors?

Do these answers suggest the forms that your evaluation should take to be used in your project setting?

Will your users' interest in the evaluation be sufficient to ensure a healthy ongoing dialogue with you and the evaluator?

Are the users and their evaluation questions clearly delineated so that you and the evaluator can decide on how to provide relevant and specific information?

What kinds of evaluation procedures should the evaluation employ to ensure that findings are credible to the various users you have in mind?

How often and in what forms might evaluation information be provided to meet users' decision needs?

On the basis of your answers to these questions -- and to other questions you may raise yourself -- which evaluation factors do you think you will have to influence personally in order to promote use? With these evaluation factors in mind, do you have a clearer picture of all the human and context factors which will impinge on the manner and extent of your influence on the evaluation?

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 1

I. Human Factors
A. EVALUATOR CHARACTERISTICS

Insert 2

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluator Characteristics
1. COMMITMENT TO USE OF EVALUATION RESULTS

Insert 3

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluator Characteristics
. . . . . .
2. WILLINGNESS TO INVOLVE USERS IN THE EVALUATION

Insert 4

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluator Characteristics
. . . . . .
3. CHOICE OF ROLE

Insert 5

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluator Characteristics
. . . . . .
4. RAPPORT WITH USERS

Insert 6

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluator Characteristics
. . . . . .
5. POLITICAL SENSITIVITY

Insert 7

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluator Characteristics
. . . . . .
6. CREDIBILITY

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 8

I. Human Factors
A. Evaluation Characteristics
. . . . . .
7. BACKGROUND AND IDENTITY

Insert 9

I. Human Factors
. . . . . .
B. USER CHARACTERISTICS

Insert 10

I. Human Factors
. . . . . .
B. User Characteristics
1. IDENTITY

Insert 11

I. Human Factors
. . . . . .
B. User Characteristics
2. INTEREST IN THE EVALUATION

Insert 12

I. Human Factors
. . . . . .
B. User Characteristics
. . . . . .
3. COMMITMENT TO USE OF EVALUATION RESULTS

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 13

I. Human Factors
. . . . .
B. User Characteristics
. . . . .
4. PROFESSIONAL STYLE(S)

Insert 14

I. Human Factors
. . . . .
B. User Characteristics
. . . . .
5. INFORMATION PROCESSING PREFERENCES

Insert 15

II. Context Factors
A. PREEXISTING EVALUATION BOUNDS

Insert 16

II. Context Factors
A. Preexisting Evaluation Bounds
1. WRITTEN REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EVALUATION

Insert 17

II. Context Factors
A. Preexisting Evaluation Bounds
. . . . .
2. OTHER CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS FOR THE EVALUATION

Insert 18

II. Context Factors
A. Preexisting Evaluation Bounds
. . . . .
3. FISCAL CONSTRAINTS

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 19

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
B. ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Insert 20

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
B. Organizational Characteristics
1. INTRAORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES

Insert 21

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
B. Organizational Characteristics
. . . . . .
2. EXTERNAL FEATURES

Insert 22

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
C. PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Insert 23

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
C. Program Characteristics
1. AGE/MATURITY

Insert 24

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
C. Program Characteristics
. . . . . .
2. INNOVATIVENESS

Insert 25

II. Context Factors
. . . . . .
C. Program Characteristics
. . . . . .
3. OVERLAP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 26

III. Evaluation Factors
- A. INFORMATION DIALOGUE

Insert 27

III. Evaluation Factors
- A. Information Dialogue
  - . . . . .
  - 1. AMOUNT OF INTERACTION BETWEEN EVALUATOR AND USERS
  - 2. QUALITY OF INTERACTION BETWEEN EVALUATOR AND USERS

Insert 28

III. Evaluation Factors
- . . . . .
- B. SUBSTANCE OF EVALUATION INFORMATION

Insert 29

III. Evaluation Factors
- . . . . .
- B. Substance of Evaluation Information
  - 1. INFORMATION RELEVANCE FOR USERS

Insert 30

III. Evaluation Factors
- . . . . .
- B. Substance of Evaluation Information
  - . . . . .
  - 2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION SELECTED FOR USERS

Insert 31

III. Evaluation Factors
- . . . . .
- C. EVALUATION REPORTING

Insert 32

III. Evaluation Factors
- . . . . .
- C. Evaluation Reporting
  - 1. FREQUENCY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 33

III. Evaluation Factors
. . . . . .
C. Evaluation Reporting
. . . . . .
2. TIMING OF INFORMATION

Insert 34

III. Evaluation Factors
. . . . . .
C. Evaluation Reporting
. . . . . .
3. FORMAT OF PRESENTATIONS

Insert 35

III. Evaluation Factors
. . . . . .
C. Evaluation Reporting
. . . . . .
4. STATISTICAL/NARRATIVE DATA

Insert 36

III. Evaluation Factors
. . . . . .
C. Evaluation Reporting
. . . . . .
5. FORMAT OF REPORTS

Insert 37

III. Evaluation Factors
. . . . . .
D. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Insert 38

III. Evaluation Factors
. . . . . .
D. Evaluation Procedures
1. METHODS USED

Chapter III Inserts

Insert 39

III. Evaluation Factors

. . . . .

D. Evaluation Procedures

. . . . . .

2. DEALING WITH MANDATED TASKS

Insert 40

III. Evaluation Factors

. . . . .

D. Evaluation Procedures

. . . . . .

3. USE OF A GENERAL MODEL

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION FACTORS: A PATTERN FOR USE

The use-related factors introduced in the previous chapter are essential elements in organizing for more effective use of evaluation information. In this chapter we will provide you with a structure that brings these factors together. The structure, which we call a factor pattern, serves two important functions:

1. It illustrates how these factors can relate to each other to increase evaluation use; and
2. It gives you, the administrator, a guide in organizing your own evaluation for enhanced use.

This chapter will also offer you a hypothetical case study of an evaluation setting -- a bilingual education program in "Hilltop" -- within which you can begin to practice your organizing tasks, using both the factor pattern and some of the factor-related tactics we discussed in Chapter III.

Why have a factor pattern?

We have designed the factor pattern as the most efficient means of synthesizing what we know about evaluation use. It reminds us, first, of the interdependence of factors in contributing to evaluation use. No factor stands alone as a completely independent element; the role of each factor is conditioned by its effect on other factors and the effects of these on it. Think of the factor "evaluator rapport" as just one example. It should be apparent that even where rapport may contribute to your intended use of the evaluation, such as direct action by teachers, rapport is more likely to make a difference if there is also, say, a certain level of teacher interest in the evaluation or if the information provided is in a form the teachers can use. In the same way, teachers' interest in the evaluation, by itself, may mean little if the information provided is inadequate or if the evaluator actively alienates the teachers. The factor pattern indicates which factors are likely to influence each other most directly in bringing about intended uses of the evaluation.

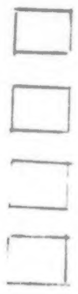
Second, the factor pattern places related groups of factors in a logical order. The pattern is a graphic representation of the simple fact that in organizing for evaluation use you will have to start somewhere. And where you start is crucial. By dealing with certain factors first, you begin to define and narrow the scope of your organizing task for the factors that follow. Looking again at the example of "evaluator rapport," it would probably be a waste of your time to worry about this factor before you knew the characteristics of the users that the evaluator will be interacting with. Nor, logically, would you make rapport your last item of concern, especially where the intended users of the evaluation (e.g., teachers in the above example) would be working with the evaluator over the course of an entire year. The order of factors within our pattern, then, is more than just a handy, step-by-step map in organizing for evaluation use. Order is also one of the ways in which factors influence each other within the context of an evaluation.

Finally, the factor pattern is applicable to most evaluation situations. It is broad enough to account for the somewhat different set of factors that contribute to potential use for every combination of use and user within your organization. To continue with our example, "evaluator rapport" may be important in getting teachers to apply information from the evaluation, but the evaluator's contact with the state and federal authorities may be too limited for rapport to play much part in the direct action they may take. Because each combination of user and use is unique in this way, we have constructed a general factor pattern that can be modified according to any of the use and user combinations you choose to focus on within your organization.

Understanding the Factor Pattern

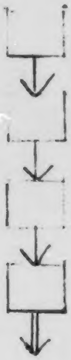
We can better understand how the factor pattern (Diagram 1) works by expressing it graphically. This will prepare you to work out variations of the pattern to fit your own situation. It will also help you understand how these variations can be applied in a hypothetical evaluation situation (later in this chapter) as well as in your own efforts to organize for greater evaluation use (Chapter 5).

The factor pattern is organized by first grouping individual factors into "clusters," set off by boxes.



A cluster tells you, the organizer, that these particular factors are related to evaluation use in the same way, distinct from other clusters in the pattern, and that these factors should be examined together and at the same time.

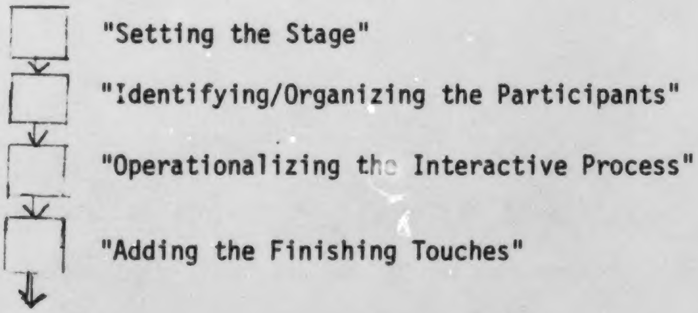
The clusters are then joined, by vertical arrows.



This indicates the order in which you should consider the sets of factors, since each cluster influences the content of the cluster beneath it.

The double-stemmed arrow at the end of the last cluster in the pattern indicates that your organizing task has been completed. It points, we hope, to the intended use of the evaluation by the users you have identified.

For convenience, we have labeled each of the clusters to provide some better indication of the factors included with each. The labels also increase your understanding of the logical sequence of clusters.


"Setting the Stage"
"Identifying/Organizing the Participants"
"Operationalizing the Interactive Process"
"Adding the Finishing Touches"

Now let's look inside the clusters. (See Diagram 1) Here we want

Diagram 1

Factor Pattern For Evaluation Use

A. Setting the Stage

- Pre-existing evaluation bounds
- User identity
- Program characteristics
- Intra-organizational features
- External features

↓
↓

B. Identifying/Organizing the Participants

- User interest in evaluation
- User commitment to use
- Evaluator characteristics
  - background/identity
  - commitment to use
  - willingness to involve user in evaluation
  - choice of role
  - political sensitivity
  - credibility
- Evaluation procedures—plan
- User professional style(s)

↓
↓

C. Operationalizing the Interactive Process

- Evaluation procedures—execution
- Substance of evaluation information
- Evaluator commitment to use
- Information dialogue—formative
- User information processing preferences

↓
↓

D. Adding the Finishing Touches

- Evaluation reporting
- Evaluator characteristics (selected)
- Information dialogue—summative
- User commitment to use

↓↓

to point out two things about how the factors are presented within a cluster. First, a factor can either be cited alone (as a whole) or it can be cited along with certain of its component elements. (Refer to Appendix for a complete list of factors.) Where we list a factor such as "pre-existing evaluation bounds," we are referring equally to all of that factor's elements: "written requirements for the evaluation," "other contractual obligations for the evaluation," and "fiscal constraints." In the same way, we list "program characteristics," "user identity," and most other factors in the pattern as a kind of shorthand for all of the elements that constitute each of those factors.

Alternatively, a factor can be cited in a cluster along with only those of its elements that are most likely to contribute to evaluation use at a given point in the organizing process. Where we specify a factor in this way, the elements are listed beneath the general factor and are set off by a dot. An example of this is the factor "evaluator characteristics." When you begin to identify and organize the evaluation's participants, the evaluator's "background and identity" and his/her "choice of role" (along with other elements shown in Diagram 1) will have a bearing on the planned uses of the evaluation. Toward the end of the evaluation process, however, as you organize the finishing touches for making use happen, you will need to concentrate on other characteristics of the evaluator, such as his/her "understanding of political considerations" and the "rapport" that's been established. At this point in the process, the evaluator's "choice of role" has already helped to shape the finishing touches and the evaluator's "background and identity" are probably no longer of as much consequence for use.

The second point about how factors are presented within a cluster is simply this: each factor should be weighed and planned for individually, on its own merits, and as it affects and is affected by other factors in the cluster. We've tried to express this dual focus in a graphic way in Diagram 1. By separating the factors within a cluster by solid horizontal lines, and yet including them together within the solid lines of the cluster as a whole, we illustrate that the factors enjoy a certain autonomy even as they act together toward evaluation use.

As we have indicated above, each of the four factor clusters represents a distinct phase, or stage, in the evaluation process. Let's now briefly look at what these stages are.

Factor Cluster A, which we've termed "Setting the stage," comprises those factors which are generally regarded as "givens" of the particular setting within which the evaluation will take place. We include here the characteristics of the program and some of the organizational constraints. Although these factors are to some extent fixed, you -- as organizer of the evaluation -- may nevertheless be able to influence them in such a way as to promote use.

The first factor cluster has "set the stage" on which the evaluation unfolds, the "context" factors which provide the framework within which the evaluation is conducted. Factor Cluster B, in contrast, concentrates more heavily on the human factors which play an important part in the evaluation use process. Thus, Factor Cluster B involves "identifying and organizing the evaluation's participants." We include in this cluster such things as the characteristics of the evaluator and the primary potential uses of the evaluation.

Factor Cluster C, "Operationalizing the interactive process," represents a transition point in our organizing for evaluation use. Factor Clusters A and B refer mainly to the planning stage of the evaluation, to those activities that are carried out prior to the actual conduct of the evaluation. Factor Clusters C and D deal mainly with conducting and reporting the evaluation itself. Here we begin to consider the period when the evaluation processes actually take place. Prior to this point we were anticipating future actions; Factor Cluster C reminds us that it is time for carrying out these planned actions. Here is where we'll put into practice the steps we've planned, guided by the examination of Factor Clusters A and B. If the planning job has been done well, then the evaluation should proceed smoothly; if not, it's still not too late to make some mid-course adjustments.

The activities suggested by the content of Factor Cluster C will, to a large extent, determine the information available for use. Thus, the questions of what that information actually comprises and of how it gets transmitted to potential users become increasingly important to the issue of evaluation use.

Factor Cluster D, "Adding the finishing touches," the last of the factor clusters, represents the final phase in maximizing the potential for evaluation use. This factor cluster belongs to that point in the evaluation process where most (if not all) of the information has been collected. In the earlier phases, you considered those characteristics of the system and of users that might make a difference in evaluation impact. Now, In Factor Cluster D, the fruits of the evaluation process are displayed for all to see and to comment upon.

Of course, there is still work to be done. Once all the information is available, it must still be communicated effectively to the right people, presumably the identified users. The users hopefully, will live up to their designation and actually use the information in some meaningful way. As you might expect from this brief rationale, the components of Factor Cluster D are more heavily weighted toward human factors once again. After all, people are the users of any evaluation. Of course, you will have done your best throughout the course of the evaluation to increase the likelihood that evaluation will be "heard" --- will contribute to the rationality of decision making.

Now that we've outlined the range of factors represented by the factor clusters, let's apply the factor pattern in looking at organizing for evaluation use. In this way, we're sure you'll be able to understand in a direct, practical way the important features of the pattern that we've outlined so far: the interdependence of the factors, as well as their relative autonomy; the logical order in which the individual factors and the factor clusters are presented; and the flexibility of the pattern as a whole, which allows you to adjust it and apply it to your own organizational task.

Hilltop

For this initial exercise, we've constructed a hypothetical case study of a school district ("Hilltop") in which a federally funded bilingual educational program ("SABER") is due for a third-year evaluation. After the brief description of the program and its cast of characters, we'll point out some of the general features of the case study that you'll want to keep in mind as you organize the "Hilltop" situation for a more useful evaluation. We'll also outline some of the many evaluation-related topics of concern raised in the Hilltop context. It is around one of these selected questions that, together, we'll apply the factor pattern to the challenge of organizing and planning for greater evaluation use.

The Hilltop Case Study

This is the second year of Hilltop district's federally funded bilingual education project, SABER (Student Achievement through Bilingual Education Resources). In line with overall school district policy of the last few years, SABER emphasizes basic reading and math skills. The project's goal is to provide a smooth transition into an all-English curriculum. Six of Hilltop's 10 elementary schools participate in SABER. The project funded students are concentrated in grades K-4, reflecting the area's recent and rapid influx of Mexican and Central American immigrants.

The project in Hilltop was instituted in response to Federal guidelines concerning non-English speaking enrollment figures. There was, at least initially, no demand for a bilingual project in Hilltop's small Mexican-American community or from the recently-arrived Spanish-speaking residents. Nor was there much support for a bilingual educational project among members of Hilltop's board of education; several members, in fact, voiced doubts about the efficacy of using Spanish language instruction as a basis for later learning English. During SABER's first year, the board's attitude was "wait and see." The Hilltop superintendent was somewhat more supportive of SABER, but due more to the project's emphasis on basic skills than its use of Spanish for instruction. The board and the superintendent are well aware, however, that Hilltop is in somewhat of a regional spotlight because of the district's rapid demographic changes, with other districts watching to see how (and how well) Hilltop deals with the problem.

SABER is operated centrally from the district office by Mrs. Mary Torres, the director. She supervises SABER instruction at all six schools, arranges for periodic inservice training for all Title VII teachers, and is the project's chief decision-maker in matters of personnel and curriculum. Mrs. Torres also oversees the procedure for initial student identification and later transfer to regular school classrooms, even though these procedures are handled on a day-to-day basis by Title VII teachers at each school using project-wide surveys, tests, and teacher assessment forms.

As director, Mrs. Torres organizes the required district bilingual advisory committee which, like its counterparts at each project site in the district, serves as an information channel to the Spanish-speaking community in Hilltop. The committees exercise no real policy-making role, although most members do participate in bilingual classrooms as aides or occasional volunteers. This direct exposure to SABER, as well as Mrs. Torres' efforts to keep the committees informed of project progress and test results, has largely dispelled the concern of some parents with the idea of teaching in Spanish. Their first priority is their children's acquisition of English.

Only at the most heavily Spanish-speaking project school, Mason St. Elementary, where almost 85 percent of the 630 students are in bilingual classrooms, has Mrs. Torres named a site-level SABER "coordinator" to ease some of her administrative and supervisory burden. Mr. Edward Lopez, Mason St.'s vice-principal and federal project coordinator, is an experienced reading and math teacher and has taught in bilingual projects outside Hilltop. He is responsible for much of the implementation and supervision at the classroom level. But because of his vice-principal duties, Mr. Lopez depends on teacher reports, test scores, and other secondary sources of information in making most SABER-related decisions, e.g., student placement, mainstreaming, choice of materials.

The annual SABER evaluations are done by Dr. George Johnson, the Hilltop district's head of program research. Because of the federal project guidelines, the emphasis of the yearly reports, which are sent on to the federal authorities and to the Hilltop board of education, is on the students' scores on nationally-normed achievement tests. But it is Mrs. Torres who, in her role as the project administrator, uses these project-wide and individual school test scores as a vital part of the decisions she must make on teacher assignment, student placement, strengthening weak classrooms, choosing appropriate in-service training procedures, and subject area materials, expansion of SABER into upper grades, and so forth. As a former teacher in bilingual projects, however, Mrs. Torres recognizes the importance of classroom activities not measured by standardized tests. As a result, she's negotiated with Dr. Johnson for additional evaluation tasks, including classroom observations, periodic reviews of the criterion-referenced tests and locally-produced curricular materials, and a number of presentations and discussions of the evaluation findings with SABER's teachers.

SABER's first annual evaluation proved to be a pleasant surprise to everyone involved. It showed SABER students scoring large gains in math and Spanish reading and smaller but encouraging gains in English reading. The gains were greatest in the lower grades, where the superintendent and board had most emphasized Hilltop's back-to-basics policy, and were equally distributed among all six SABER schools. The test results did much to solidify support within the district administration and in the community, and they contributed as well to acceptance of the project's native-language approach. Some teachers at Mason St. and elsewhere, however, still attribute the gains to the lower student-instructor ratio made possible by federally funded project aides rather than to the bilingual method itself.

Both Mrs. Torres and Mr. Lopez have become especially concerned with the results from the second year evaluation. Not only were the test score gains less than the preceding year, but teacher reports and monthly criterion-referenced tests confirmed a decline after the first year's strong performance. Their questions at this point are: are these indications of a decline accurate? If so, what are the possible reasons (e.g., materials? teacher execution? native-language first approach?) Mrs. Torres already has some tentative answers, drawn from her own experience and occasional observations in the schools, but she is counting on the evaluation to provide specific data. Looking ahead to the consequences of the coming third-year evaluation, Mrs. Torres perceives some project risk in that the school board may decide not to continue the project. However, personal risk for most key personnel, including Mrs. Torres, is minimized since they all have tenure within the district. Reassignment for Mrs. Torres, though, would undoubtedly entail a loss of status and authority. For the teachers in the project, a lack of project continuance might well result in some less desirable assignments.

Mrs. Torres sees a certain urgency in obtaining the evaluation data during this coming, third year of the project. First, she recognizes that the federal funding will be terminating at the end of the year, and there will be the necessity for the school board and district administration to make a decision on whether the project will be continued as a district-funded activity. She is aware that these decisions will need to be made in conjunction with the district budget hearings for the following year, since they will involve teacher reassignments and may potentially affect the hiring of new personnel within the district. She also recognizes the necessity of making the board aware of the upcoming decision facing them and of providing appropriate evaluative information that might be used as a part of that decision.

Mrs. Torres also sees the possibility that the evaluation data will contribute in other ways. She would hope that evaluation data would provide insights that she might find helpful in making project decisions about classroom materials or in-service strategies throughout the current year. That is, she sees the evaluative data as serving program improvement purposes throughout the course of the upcoming year, in addition to its potential for influencing decisions about subsequent funding.

Hilltop: An Overview

The Hilltop case describes a project that enjoys a certain amount of district support because of the appropriateness of its learning objectives and the concern about education of students from bilingual backgrounds. Moreover, it gains some respect throughout the district by virtue of the positive test scores at the end of the first year. However, based upon the second-year evaluation, there have been some questions raised about whether program gains are "real." Apparently, the failure to attain the same large gains in test scores as in the first year have led to some question about the impact of the program. Moreover, these concerns have been fortified by teacher reports during the year. Of concern then, during this third year, is providing additional student outcome data to clarify the authenticity of project impact on students. Furthermore, it is important to gain some insights into classroom instructional processes (materials, in-service strategies, teacher characteristics, etc.) that might contribute most to changes in student test scores. It is hoped that this instructional process data could be used to further improve the project in the event that it is continued as a regular district program.

In exploring the potential of the evaluation to contribute to program improvements as well as to any ultimate decision on project continuation decisions, we should keep in mind three important features of the Hilltop situation. First and foremost is the central role played by Mrs. Torres, the project director. Her actions and influence reach every aspect of the project, and as director, she also deals directly with every group or agency that has an interest in SABER, including Dr. Johnson, the evaluator. Remember that it was Mrs. Torres who decided what additional evaluation tasks, beyond student testing, were to be conducted, and it is Mrs. Torres who will first receive the evaluation's findings. Not all the project-related decisions are taken by the director alone, of course; nor can she completely control how others perceive SABER. But Mrs. Torres is in the position of being able to provide evaluation-based information that others will take into account and as such, she is clearly the person who will be expected to organize for evaluation use.

The second feature of the Hilltop case is the multiplicity of potential users of the evaluation: the program director herself; SABER and other teachers; Mr. Lopez, the program's Mason St. site coordinator; the district's superintendent and board of education; the Parents Advisory Council; the Hilltop community at large; and the state and federal authorities who fund the project. Each is at a different level of authority or influence vis-a-vis SABER, and each will find uses for the evaluation that reflect that position. The same evaluation information -- student test scores, for example -- might be used by teachers to re-group students in SABER classrooms and by the Hilltop school board to decide on continued funding of the project. Likewise, some users will be concerned with a wide range of evaluation topics while other users will limit their concern to a few specific topics. By way of example, contrast Mrs. Torres, who deals with every aspect of SABER, and the community's bilingual advisory committees, whose role is primarily one of public relations.

The third feature we have built into the Hilltop case is the various kinds of uses that each user group can make of the evaluation. Mrs. Torres, as project administrator, could herself use the information in her choice of curriculum materials. This is an example of an action use. Another action use of the evaluation would be the Board's consideration of the evaluation findings and recommendations when it decides on project continuation. Action use may also be made by a project member who may hold a lesser administrative or non-administrative role. For example, site coordinator Lopez might use the information provided by Mrs. Torres to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and thus, to be better able to supervise them effectively.

Mrs. Torres' efforts to change ideas or attitudes about SABER, in contrast, are what we have called conceptual use (e.g., convincing

Hilltop parents and other districts that SABER's native language approach is effective). Another conceptual use occurs when the parent advisory committees are provided with information they can use to consolidate support for the project in the community. Note again that Mrs. Torres, as organizer of the evaluation, is the central figure.

Organizing for Evaluation Use

As she plans, then, for organizing the Hilltop evaluation to maximize the potential for use, Mrs. Torres will need to attend simultaneously to several evaluation topics as well as the potential user groups interested in each of those topics. For example, here is a sample of several topics relevant to the SABER project evaluation:

- What accounts for the decline in student achievement, and what modifications, if any, should be made in project operation?
- How should Mrs. Torres allocate her time as administrator to best increase the likelihood of program improvement?
- Non-bilingual project teachers have doubts about the appropriateness and the efficacy of SABER's native language first approach.
- If SABER is to be expanded, recommendations will need to be made about staffing, grade levels to be included, project operation guidelines, curriculum, budget, and the like.

We have reviewed these topics and selected one for our detailed case study. The exercise focuses on the actions to be taken by Mrs. Torres to maximize evaluation use. Now, consider the situation Mrs. Torres is facing. It's the summer before the third year of the project, and she's considering the evaluation to be conducted during the next school year.

She has identified a prime evaluation topic -- namely, the decision the board will have to make about whether they will fund the program out of district monies after this, the third year of operation under federal funds. She has also identified the school board as the potential evaluation user in this context. In addition, Mrs. Torres herself intends to use the evaluation for purposes of program improvement. She is concerned, therefore, about being sufficiently attentive to those factors which can maximize the impact of the third-year evaluation, with the ultimate goal of helping to make the evaluation information more influential to the decisionmaking process.

As Mrs. Torres is deciding how best to proceed, she turns to Factor Cluster A as the most logical starting point, since she needs, in essence, to "set the stage" for the evaluation. As Diagram 1 previously reminds us, the factors within this cluster are: pre-existing evaluation bounds, user identity, program characteristics, intra-organizational features, and external features. If you were in Mrs. Torres' place, you would likely spend a great deal of time and effort examining each of these factors in detail as it relates to this evaluation situation. However, we don't want to either overwhelm you or bore you with an exhaustive critique. Thus, in our discussion we will take a more global view of the elements within each of the factor clusters and consider only some of the kinds of things that Mrs. Torres might do at each stage of the process.

In the pages which follow, we'll phrase our discussion in terms of the problems that Mrs. Torres faces during the course of the year, and the procedures she follows in dealing with these problems. To help you better relate the discussion to the factor clusters, we'll provide a reference point in the left margin.

SETTING THE STAGE

Problem

Pre-existing
evaluation
bounds

Because this is a federally-funded project, Mrs. Torres is knowledgeable about her obligations to satisfy the federal regulations regarding evaluation. One of these regulations is the reporting of norm-referenced test scores. Mrs. Torres is well aware that there is some discrepancy between the first- and second-year test score results; in fact, the federal program monitor wasted little time getting on the phone to her after receiving the second-year evaluation report. Resolving this apparent discrepancy is, therefore, one of the pre-existing bounds on the evaluation -- not just because Mrs. Torres and the federal monitor are concerned about this aspect, but also because Mrs. Torres knows that the board will be asking about it later.

Possible Actions

How would you organize the evaluation in order to respond to this pre-existing constraint?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Mrs. Torres decides that she needs to make sure that the evaluator understands exactly what reporting requirements must be satisfied in terms of the federal mandates, as well as what procedures are necessary to carry out the norm-referenced testing. She wants to make certain that this issue is specified in the letter of agreement with Dr. Johnson outlining his tasks in conducting the evaluation for the district. If Johnson were an evaluator from outside the district, she would make certain that these issues were clarified in the evaluator's contract; since Johnson is a member of Hilltop's Research and Evaluation staff, there is no formal contract.

SETTING THE STAGE

Problem

The present Hilltop Board of Education is comprised of five members, elected at large from the community. Of these five members, three are "old timers" and two are new. Mrs. Torres knows that of the three "old" members, two of them are statistically-oriented and have in the past closely scrutinized the standardized test results. The third "old" member is distrustful of numbers and statistics, and reacts negatively to having to examine the test results as they were previously reported. The two new members are fairly unknown quantities in terms of their attitudes toward statistical data, but Mrs. Torres does know that they are inexperienced in educational matters and know little about the district's programs -- particularly SABER.

User identity

Possible Actions

How can Mrs. Torres plan to respond effectively to the range of users represented by the current Board members?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Mrs. Torres decided on a two-pronged approach to this problem. First, she decided that the evaluation report should have several different features than in the past: for example, there should be an appendix containing technical statistical data which will be targeted to the two "old" board members who are likely to want such data available; there should be an executive summary which presents in narrative form the same information in terms that the non-statistically oriented board members can interpret. Second, she realizes that she will need to try to obtain additional information about the two new board members, plus she will need to provide information to them about the project, its goals and its operating procedures.

Mrs. Torres confers first with Dr. Johnson, to alert him to the need for preparing both the statistical appendix and an executive summary as part of his evaluation report. Next she sends information about the project to the new board members and invites them to personally visit and observe in SABER classrooms. Finally, Mrs. Torres tries to identify any other personnel with whom she is acquainted who may be able to provide some insight into the two new board members -- their likes, dislikes, views on education, etc.

SETTING THE STAGE

Problem

Program: characteristics

innovativeness

Mrs. Torres is concerned that the board might not fully understand the innovativeness of the SABER program and, in particular, the nature and rationale of the native-language-first approach. Thus, she recognizes the possibility that the district might elect to provide program funding in the name of SABER but based on a different concept -- e.g., teaching English first. In that event, she might have to make the decision of whether to personally support funding a program which does not employ the native language approach, or whether she is willing to head another kind of program in order to both provide at least some special program to serve bilingual students and maintain her own position in the district.

Possible Actions

What could Mrs. Torres do to help reduce the likelihood that the board will fund another type of program rather than SABER as it presently is conceived?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

What Mrs. Torres needs to do is to gradually explain to the board over the course of the year the nature of the program so that the decision at the end of the year does not subvert the original intent of the program. She hopes that the board by that time will understand the rationale behind making SABER a native-language-first program. Torres also has to clarify that rationale and approach to Dr. Johnson so that the evaluation will be attentive to trying to assess the influence of the native-language-first approach.

SETTING THE STAGE

Intraorganizational features:

other kinds of information

Problem

Mrs. Torres notes that there are many sources of "behind the scenes" information which might play a role in the board's decision. She feels that some of these information sources could be recognized and incorporated more formally into the evaluation. She believes that attention to these other information sources would minimize the possibility of the board's ignoring the data provided by the evaluator in preference to some other, unattributed data which, they maintain, is contradictory. For example, Mrs. Torres is aware that the board has in the past been very responsive to parent concerns and opinions. She remembers attending a board meeting when a favorable evaluation report of a district curriculum was presented, but the board, citing unspecified unfavorable parent opinions of the curriculum, asked the curriculum staff to do major revisions.

Possible Actions

What could Mrs. Torres do first to identify the other sources of information that might be reaching the board and second, to incorporate these sources within the framework of the evaluation?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Mrs. Torres needed more input for this problem, so she set up a meeting with Dr. George Johnson to see what he might suggest. They jointly agreed that it might be valuable to provide some indications of parent attitude toward SABER. Johnson in turn developed a questionnaire to assess how parents felt about their child's progress in the program, whether parents wanted their children to continue to have the opportunity to participate in SABER the following year, and whether parents saw some other types of impact from the program (e.g., increased or improved communications between parents and children, etc.)

In addition, Dr. Johnson agreed to keep his "ear to the ground" in order to pick up on any other information sources relevant to the board's decision process which might be incorporated into the evaluation. Mrs. Torres would also be on the alert to identify such extra-evaluation sources.

SETTING THE STAGE

Problem

Intraorganizational features:

other kinds of information

Mrs. Torres also recognizes that parents are not the only information source within the community. Many times people comment either favorably or unfavorably about the program who are not connected with it. It is important to recognize that they too may be a source of other information to the board. For example, several of the school board members belong to the Rotary Club and to the local downtown merchants association. There are always a number of people who would ask: "What the heck are you guys doing at our schools? Having the kids walking around jabbering in Spanish? Why don't you make them into real Americans? What kind of schools are you running? Are they just playgrounds where kids speaking other languages avoid having to really learn?"

Possible Actions

What can Mrs. Torres do to counter the potential negative effects of uninformed public comments and alternately, to capitalize on positive public opinion?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Mrs. Torres wants to make sure that potential uninformed information does not impede on the decision process and lessen the impact of the evaluation results. Thus, she recognizes that it is important to mount a public relations effort which can provide an explanation to the community at large as to what the program is doing. She also feels that it is important to describe and justify the conceptual basis for this kind of program. She writes an article on this topic for the local community newspaper, arranges to be interviewed by a local reporter, and talks to board members about the possibility of making a presentation at the Rotary Club meeting. She indicates in her public comments that she will not be discussing the results of the evaluation, but she points out that the program is being evaluated. She also describes the native language approach to instruction and why it has been adopted for SABER. She also emphasizes that people are not being asked to accept this program on faith. She mentions the conceptual basis for such a program and indicates that the board is open-minded about the issue of whether or not it is working satisfactorily in the Hilltop school district. She confirms that the evaluation is being conducted by Dr. George Johnson, an expert from the district's Research and Evaluation office, who will make results available to the board in time for them to make project decisions.

IDENTIFYING/ORGANIZING THE PARTICIPANTS

Problem

User interest:

questions and concerns

The major decision facing the project in the coming year is whether it will be funded by the district. Mrs. Torres recognizes this issue as the most important question the evaluation can help answer. Nonetheless, even though there is already a guiding framework for the evaluation in terms of looking at the academic achievements of students and certain other pre-specified outcome measures, there may be other concerns that the board members have expressed about the program or its operation that the evaluation can also help answer.

What has been particularly informative to Mrs. Torres in regard to identifying what some of these other concerns or questions might be have been her observations of school board meetings and her informal contacts with various board members. She feels that she has picked up a number of comments relating to other issues beyond that of the test scores that she feels the evaluation should respond to, both in terms of strengthening the evaluation itself as a responsive activity and in terms of providing additional evidence that can ultimately contribute to the board's decision making.

Possible Actions

What might Mrs. Torres do to make sure that the users' other questions and concerns have been identified and will be dealt with during the evaluation?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Mary Torres feels that it is necessary for her to get together with George Johnson to consider the extent to which the evaluation plan would seem to be responsive to the questions and concerns either expressed or implied by the board members. Johnson's plan had earlier been submitted to her and had been approved; she in turn had sent an information copy to the superintendent. She now thinks that it might be helpful to have Dr. Johnson make a presentation to the board, walking them through the evaluation plan. The board would thus have an opportunity to provide their input as to whether the information they need to satisfy their individual interests is likely to be available through the evaluation as it is presently planned. She decides to make contact with the superintendent to discuss this matter and to schedule a date for the presentation.

IDENTIFYING/ORGANIZING THE PARTICIPANTS

Problem

Evaluator characteristics:

role

Dr. George Johnson has been in the research and evaluation unit of the school district for a good many years. Recently, most of his assigned work has tended to be research oriented, requiring him to develop and implement large scale-data collection schemes. Mrs. Torres is concerned about George's flexibility in this regard during the coming third-year SABER evaluation. After all, the SABER project is not a controlled, classical experimental situation. Mrs. Torres is all too well aware that in the real world, data collection does not always occur as planned and on schedule.

Evaluator characteristics:

political sensitivity

There is another characteristic about Dr. Johnson in his role as project evaluator which concerns Mrs. Torres. Sometimes, when George is engaged in informal conversation, Mrs. Torres has observed that he doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut when discussing potentially sensitive issues. For example, Mrs. Torres heard that George had been sitting around the teachers' coffee room the other night and, with a board member sitting at the next table, had been heard to remark that he felt the evaluation's results would indeed confirm a continuing decline in student achievement. Mrs. Torres, noting that achievement testing had not yet even begun, worries that Johnson's remarks may have been overheard by the board member and would thus reflect negatively in that person's mind in all future dealings with SABER. Mrs. Torres has already heard from several teachers who were present in the room and who were upset that George's remarks reflected negatively on their teaching.

While Torres certainly respects Johnson's right to have his own opinions, she also feels that he needs to know when not to express those opinions. In her view, Johnson lacks political sensitivity to the situation surrounding SABER. He doesn't seem to realize that as the evaluator of the project, his expressed personal views may be misinterpreted as evaluation evidence by casual listeners.

Possible Actions

What might Mrs. Torres do to encourage George to take a more flexible attitude towards data collection under SABER's evaluation plan and to let George know that he needs to develop more sensitivity to political considerations when expressing his personal opinions?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

It seems clear to Mrs. Torres that she needs to have a serious talk with Dr. Johnson about his evaluation role within the project. There will be several aspects to this discussion. At the more general level, she wants to reiterate to him the importance of the way he conducts the evaluation. She will point out that she knows how concerned they both are about the role the evaluation will play and their mutual desire to see the evaluation findings reflected in the decisions to be made by the board. She points out, however, that he needs to be willing to make adjustments to the way the data might be collected for SABER. For example, some of the data may be missing due to some external circumstances. Rather than just simply accepting missing values, George needs to be attentive to finding another way to collect similar data to replace that which is missing.

On a more personal level, Mrs. Torres will also express her concern to George about the way his off-the-cuff comments could potentially undercut the evaluation and its usefulness to the board. She again reiterates how important the evaluation is to SABER's future and expresses the hope that, in fairness to SABER and to all the people who are working hard to try to make it a success, no program-related information be misinterpreted by staff or by any board member prior to the formal release of evaluation findings. She feels that as a result of their talk, George will be more discreet in his informal conversations when in public areas of the school.

OPERATIONALIZING THE INTERACTIVE PROCESS

Problem

Information dialogue:

formative

Mary Torres is aware that the evaluation has been taking place for a couple of months now, but she hasn't yet had much direct feedback from Johnson. She would like to know what he has been observing and if there are any problems that need to be addressed. After all, program improvement is the primary goal of formative evaluation!

In addition, Mrs. Torres knows that it is important to make sure that the District Office is aware that the evaluation is indeed in progress and that evaluation information is being used to effect improvement in the current operation of the project.

Possible Actions

What can Mrs. Torres do to increase the flow of evaluation information both to herself and to the District Office?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Torres suggests to Dr. Johnson that he might want to meet with her on a regular basis to keep her informed about the results of his observations and initial data collection. She also suggests that he might consider writing a brief "status report" or even a photocopied newsletter for distribution every month. This monthly update might indicate what's happening -- tentative results -- and a description of the kinds of evaluation activities that are taking place. She pointed out to Johnson that she, the project staff, and the top administrators to the district might receive the report, along with people who are on the Parents Council. Torres feels that the status reports will serve several purposes: it will alert her to initial findings and areas of potential concern, and it will alert teachers and other project staff to initial findings so that they can make operational changes. The presence of this formative evaluation reported to the district administration may also help in developing a sensitivity to evaluation information and an anticipation of the summative results.

OPERATIONALIZING THE INTERACTIVE PROCESS

Problem

Substance of evaluation information

Mrs. Torres has been feeling good about the forthcoming evaluation report. She has seen several board members around the district office, and they have commented to her that they are looking forward to seeing the evaluation report and feel that it will be quite helpful to them in their decision making. She thinks that the substance of the report will be relevant to the board's concerns, because she is aware of the amount of attention that she and Dr. Johnson have given to making sure that the information is "on target." However, she has recently had some slight qualms about the way things are going.

At last week's staff meeting, for example, the topic of the parent questionnaires came up and several teachers reported that the returns from parents had been very low. The parent questionnaire had been given to children to take home. This system usually works fairly well; however, this has not been the case with the SABER questionnaire. Mary Torres knows that Dr. Johnson has made a sincere effort to get participation. The questionnaire was printed in both Spanish and English; the cover letter seemed to her to be effective in eliciting cooperation. Mrs. Torres theorizes that the low rate of return may in fact be due to reluctance on the part of foreign-born parents to participate in activities that they view in some way as related to government. She is not quite sure. However, with the very low rate of return (only around 10%) and virtually no responses on the open-ended questions, Torres wonders whether Dr. Johnson will be able to provide convincing data to the board with respect to the question of parent attitudes.

Possible Actions

Will the evaluation data being collected by Johnson on parent attitudes and effects of the program on the parent-child relationships be sufficient? Would the board consider the data relevant when there is such a small response and no in-depth comments? What can Torres do?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

Mary Torres discussed the situation with George Johnson. She indicated concern and asked Johnson for suggestions. They jointly agreed that it wasn't very likely that very many more responses would come in. George recognized the problem of the possible reticence of bilingual parents to complete the questionnare and suggested that there was a need for personal contact. He noted, however, that he had insufficient staff to conduct all the interviews necessary. He inquired of Mrs. Torres whether the teachers could do a follow up with a brief phone call to each of the parents. Torres rejected this idea, indicating that she did not want to bias the evaluation results with the participation of the teachers in the data collection (particularly when a part of the data collection calls for the gathering of anecdotal data). Dr. Johnson and Torres agreed that it might strengthen the data base if Johnson were to conduct several home interviews of parents randomly selected and write them up as mini-case studies to supplement the questionnaire data.

ADDING THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Problem

User commitment to use

Mrs. Torres has just received some evaluation information from Dr. Johnson regarding the criterio-referenced testing the teachers have been conducting during the fall. These results seem to indicate that student performance is continuing to decline. Mrs. Torres is initially inclined to doubt these results, and to assume that there has been some mistake either on George's part, or else in the construction of the tests themselves. Mrs. Torres catches herself, though, in the act of seemingly trying to ignore the evaluation results -- certainly not a position a use-oriented administrator should exemplify! But still ...?

Possible Actions

Faced with this dilemma, what could Mrs. Torres do?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

At first, Mrs. Torres decided to conduct a quiet investigation into whether the tests themselves could perhaps be the cause of invalid evaluation results. She quickly found, however, that the tests did in fact, reflect the curriculum. After brief discussions with George, she confirmed that the results had been presented accurately. Mrs. Torres decided in the absence of a prima facie reason to doubt the evaluation results, she should accept them as valid and look elsewhere for the explanation as to the lowered student achievement. She realizes that she had been somewhat neglecting her supervisory responsibilities as project administrator and decides to begin observing again in the SABER classrooms and keeping in closer touch with the teachers. She also makes a special effort to get in touch with parents who have in the past been willing to provide her feedback about how the program was affecting their children to get their perceptions of this year's program operation. What she finds, somewhat to her surprise, is that several of the teachers were not in fact following the planned program of instruction. Thus, is it not surprising that student achievement is lowered on the criterion-referenced tests which are geared closely to the SABER curriculum. Realizing that her initial negative reactions to George's findings were unwarranted, she invites George to attend a meeting of the project staff to discuss the content areas covered by the next set of criterion-referenced tests. She also asks George to assist her by visiting more often in those classrooms which she has identified as not following the prescribed curriculum plan. As a result of this episode, Mrs. Torres reconfirms her commitment to using the evaluation results in her own supervisory activities.

ADDING THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Problem

Evaluation reporting

User commitment to use

Dr. Johnson has completed his final evaluation report for SABER and has distributed it to the board members. Now it's the evening of the board meeting at which George is to formally present his report. So far things seem to have gone well: the board members have been listening attentively and there have been no external interruptions during his presentation. Midway through George's summary, however, one of the new board members interrupts and says, "Wait a minute, Dr. Johnson, I just don't understand what all these test figures mean that you've been talking about."

Possible Actions

How should George respond to this question?

Organizing for Evaluation Use

George had been pleased with the job he did on the evaluation report - he felt that it treated SABER and its accomplishments fairly and accurately. He had taken pains to make sure that the report contained several features designed to ease the reader through the material (for example, there was an executive summary at the beginning, and an appendix with the more technical data at the end, and several charts and graphs as appropriate within the body of the text). However, he wanted to make sure that he would do the best job he could of representing the SABER program in front of the board, so he had requested a meeting with Mary Torres the week prior to his presentation to get her suggestions.

His meeting with Mrs. Torres was designed to be a strategy session to brainstorm effective presentation techniques. One of the strategies they came up with was to develop, but keep in reserve, alternate ways of analyzing and presenting the findings. Thus, when the question arose during the actual board meeting, Dr. Johnson was able to bring out several of the visuals he had prepared after his meeting with Mrs. Torres. These visuals had been designed specifically with the new board members in mind, anticipating the types of questions they might be likely to ask. In developing these additional materials, George wanted to be responsive to the different information needs of the various users and their differeing preferences for how they liked information presented. Had questions been asked by other more knowledgable board members requesting further evaluation, George would have been able to bring out a different set of charts which he had also prepared in anticipation of the actual event.

Not only did the board members receive additional explanation and information from Dr. Johnson, but the very fact that he was so well prepared to respond to them increased the board's confidence in the evaluation and its findings.

Conclusion

Organizing your evaluation for use around the factor clusters we have described has advantages. The patterns are linked by a realistic logic, a kind of logic that you have probably followed in other situations. In many ways, it corresponds with the kind of systematic planned activity you would engage in to make any venture successful. No less with an evaluation situation.

Your initial concern is with "setting the stage" -- structuring the activity, deciding what you want to accomplish, and what resources and constraints will limit your actions. A subsequent concern lies with the intended procedures and the various actors. Your concern as a manager is being aware of each, how they operate and the ways that you can facilitate accomplishment of goals. As an activity progresses, you become aware of actions that you can take during the operationalizing of the process. And, finally, as management activities come to a close you want to be assured that the finishing touches are added -- that all of your efforts are properly reflected in the end product. It is similarly applicable in most evaluation settings, yet sufficiently flexible that it can be adapted to meet particular needs. The evaluation clusters simply "translate" this kind of management thinking into the specifics of an evaluation situation.

In this chapter you have viewed the ways in which Mary Torres has been able to respond to organizing for evaluation use. In the next chapter, you will have an opportunity to apply this factor pattern and its several clusters to a problem of your own choosing.

CHAPTER V

ORGANIZING FOR EVALUATION USE: APPLICATION TO YOUR PROJECT

At this point, if you've been following our line of reasoning and the illustrative examples and scenarios in the preceding four chapters, you should be ready to deal with your own project's evaluation.

First, let's summarize the steps that have led up to this threshold. We began by defining basic concepts such as evaluation use, evaluation user, and evaluation factor (Chapter II). Next, we identified and described the array of possible evaluation factors, pointing out along the way some of the interrelationships among the different factors (Chapter III). Finally, we identified a factor pattern with four clusters, presented a scenario, and examined the factor pattern within the context of that scenario (Chapter IV). Now it's up to you to assume once again your administrative role and to take charge of organizing your own evaluation situation.

Remember that the goal of this guide is to show you how to organize an evaluation so as to maximize the likelihood of use. We have emphasized that the more the various users are involved in the planning, execution, and analysis of the evaluation, the more likely it is that evaluation use, as we have defined it, will occur. We have also emphasized that the more you are aware of the particular factors present in the evaluation situation, the more likely it is that you will be able to exert a positive influence on these factors, to insure that they work for, rather than against, evaluation use.

Organizing Your Evaluation

With these important reminders in mind, let us turn next to the task of organizing your own evaluation. To help you in this important task, we have provided a series of worksheets, one for each of the factor patterns with which you should now be familiar. These worksheets are designed to allow you to note important information pertaining to your evaluation situation and to list some positive actions you and others can take to influence evaluation use.

On the next page, you will find a diagram of the four factor clusters reproduced again for your reference. This is to remind you of the order in which you need to consider the factors which are most likely to affect your evaluation.

Following the diagram is a series of four worksheets, one for each of the four factor clusters. These four worksheets are followed by an enlargement of part of Worksheet A, dealing with the first factor cluster. Please turn now to this practice Worksheet A (p. 126).

Factor Pattern For Evaluation Use

A. Setting the Stage

- Pre-existing evaluation bounds
- User identity
- Program characteristics
- Intra-organizational features
- External features

↓
↓

B. Identifying/Organizing the Participants

- User interest in evaluation
- User commitment to use
- Evaluator characteristics
    - background/identity
    - commitment to use
    - willingness to involve user in evaluation
    - choice of role
    - political sensitivity
    - credibility
- Evaluation procedures—plan
- User professional style(s)

↓
↓

C. Operationalizing the Interactive Process

- Evaluation procedures—execution
- Substance of evaluation information
- Evaluator commitment to use
- Information dialogue—formative
- User information processing preferences

↓
↓

D. Adding the Finishing Touches

- Evaluation reporting
- Evaluator characteristics (selected)
- Information dialogue—summative
- User commitment to use

↓↓

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster A:

Pre-existing evaluation bounds
User identity
Program characteristics
Intra-organizational features
External features

→→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-1. Pre-existing evaluation bounds (written requirements; other contractual obligations; fiscal constraints)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-2. User identity (range; organizational positions; professional experience levels)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet A (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-3. Program characteristics (age; maturity; innovativeness; overlap with other programs)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-4. Intraorganizational features (central/district office roles & relationships; institutional arrangements & autonomy; other likely kinds of information; perceived institutional & financial risk)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-5. External features (community climate & influence; role of other agencies)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet B

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster B:

- User interest in evaluation
- User commitment to use
- Evaluator characteristics (selected) →→→→→→→→→→→→→
- Evaluation procedures—plan
- User professional style(s)

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
B-1. User interest in evaluation (views about program; questions & concerns; predisposition to eval./evaluator; need for eval.; expectations and risks for the eval.)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
B-2. User commitment to use	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Worksheet B (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
B-3. Evaluator characteristics (selected) (background/identity; credibility; choice of role; willingness to involve user; commitment to use; political sensitivity)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
B-4. Evaluation procedures—plan	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
B-5. User professional style(s) (administrative & organizational skills; initiative; openness to new ideas)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet C

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster C:

Evaluation procedures—execution
Substance of evaluation information
Evaluator commitment to use
Information dialogue—formative
User information processing preferences

→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
C-1. Evaluation procedures—execution (methods to be used; dealing with mandated tasks)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
C-2. Substance of evaluation information (specific information selected; information relevance to audience)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet C (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
C-3. Evaluator commitment to use	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
C-4. Information dialogue—formative (amount & quality of interaction between evaluator and user(s))	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
C-5. User information processing preferences	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet D

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster D:

Evaluation reporting
Evaluator characteristics (selected)
Information dialogue—summative
User commitment to use

→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
D-1. Evaluation reporting (frequency; timing; format of report; statistical/narrative data; format of presentation)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
D-2. Evaluator characteristics (selected) (commitment to use; political sensitivity)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet D (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
D-3. Information dialogue—summative (amount, type and quality of interaction between evaluator and user(s))	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
D-4. User commitment to use	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Practice Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster A:

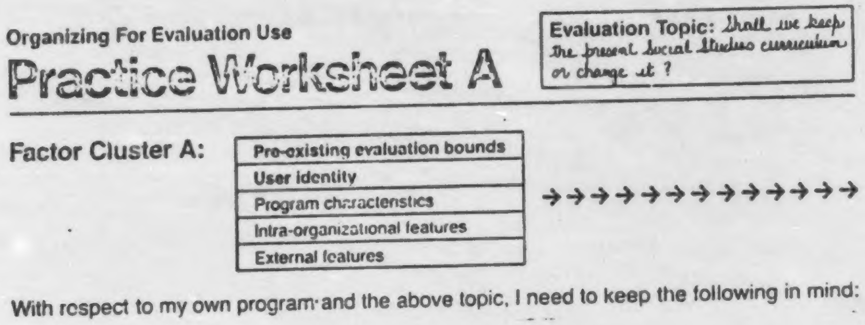
- **Pre-existing evaluation bounds**
- **User identity**
- Program characteristics
- Intra-organizational features
- External features

→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-1. Pre-existing evaluation bounds (written requirements; other contractual obligations; fiscal constraints)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-2. User identity (range; organizational positions; professional experience levels)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Take a look at the first line of the worksheet, labeled "Evaluation Topic." What you should do here is to identify a major area of concern or a major question pertaining to your project that you want the evaluation to help deal with. Note that the evaluation topic should be phrased as a question, to make it as specific as possible. Once you have identified the appropriate topic of your evaluation situation, write it out on the space provided. Go ahead and write in the book -- the practice worksheet is provided for just that purpose. As you can see, we have gone ahead and written out our evaluation topic in the example below:



Organizing For Evaluation Use

Practice Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic: Shall we keep the present Social Studies curriculum or change it?

Factor Cluster A:

Pre-existing evaluation bounds
User identity
Program characteristics
Intra-organizational features
External features

→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Underneath the evaluation topic is reproduced the particular factor cluster under consideration, in this case, Factor Cluster A. The factor cluster is followed by an arrow pointing to the right (⟶). This arrow indicates that, once you have completed your work with Factor Cluster A, you must proceed to Factor Cluster B, the next logical step in your efforts to organize the evaluation so as to promote evaluation use.

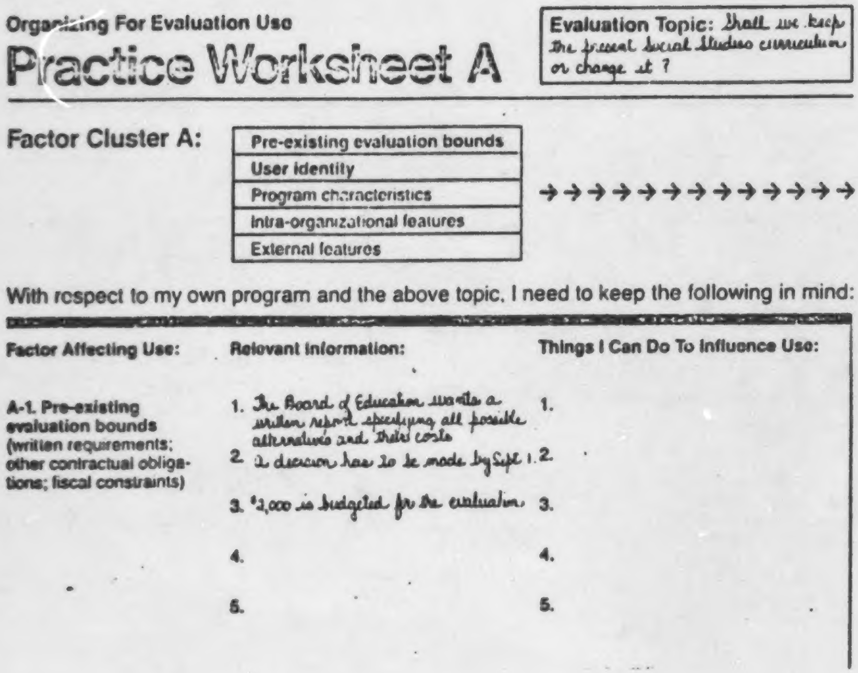
Following the factor cluster, we've provided a reminder phrase to jog your memory about your own program's characteristics as you continue on to fill out the worksheet. Underneath the reminder phrase, you'll notice three major headings:

FACTOR AFFECTING USE	RELEVANT INFORMATION	THINGS I CAN DO TO INFLUENCE USE

The first column lists the individual factors, which were described in Chapter III. We have already filled in this information for you in abbreviated form. In the case of Worksheet A, the first factor is identified as "Pre-existing evaluation bounds." If necessary, take a moment to look back and refresh your memory about this factor.

In the second column, "Relevant Information," you are asked to note your observations about each of the factors listed in the first column, as the factor applies to your situation. Think now about the evaluation topic you've just identified; think about your program and its operation; think about what may be required in the way of evaluation information and about what you may want to require your evaluator to do to satisfy either your own needs or those of the other users; and finally, think about the fiscal and other resources available for the evaluation.

After you have thought these questions through, summarize your thoughts in the "Relevant Information" column. To help you organize your observations, we've provided a numbered list in the blank column. Use as many numbers as you need to write down all the relevant information. We've gone ahead and provided our own completed example below:



Organizing For Evaluation Use

Practice Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic: Shall we keep the present Social Studies curriculum or change it?

Factor Cluster A:

- Pre-existing evaluation bounds
- User identity
- Program characteristics
- Intra-organizational features
- External features

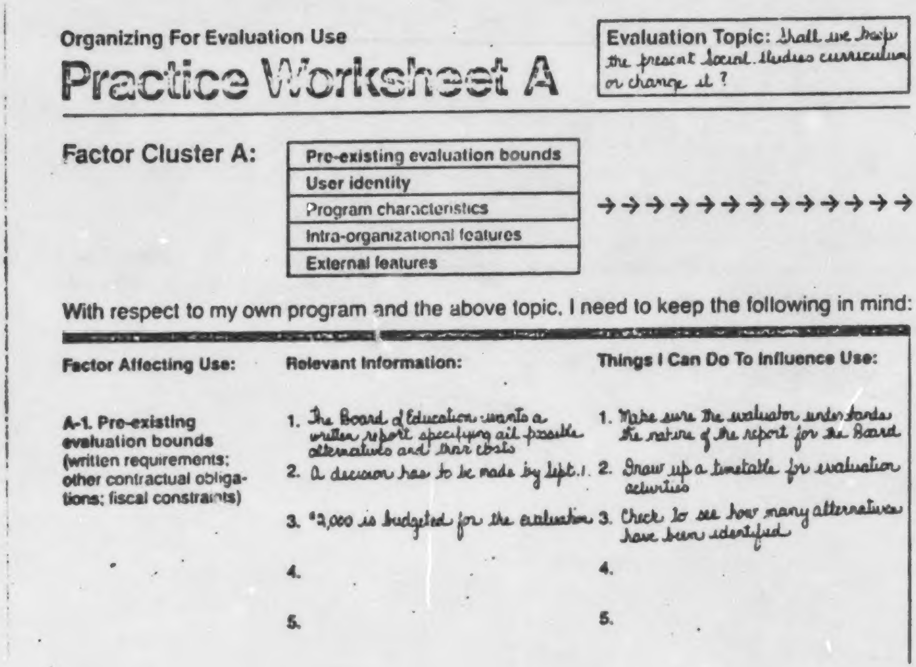
→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-1. Pre-existing evaluation bounds (written requirements; other contractual obligations; fiscal constraints)	1. The Board of Education wants a written report specifying all possible alternatives and their costs	1.
	2. A decision has to be made by Sept. 1.	2.
	3. $2,000 is budgeted for the evaluation.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

When you have filled out the second column of the practice Worksheet A to your own satisfaction, turn to the third column, "Things I Can Do to Influence Use." For this column, think of the specific steps you can take to help insure that this particular factor will affect evaluation use in a positive way. Your intention in taking these steps is to clarify, explicate, or modify the factor either to enhance its potential favorable influence on use or to mitigate, as far as possible, any potential negative effect it may have on use.

When you are ready, go ahead and fill out this third column as it pertains to your own program. Be sure to phrase your statements in terms of definite actions; use concrete verbs; list only things that you or someone else can do. You'll find our completed example below:



Organizing For Evaluation Use

Practice Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic: Shall we keep the present Social Studies curriculum or change it?

Factor Cluster A:

Pre-existing evaluation bounds
User identity
Program characteristics
Intra-organizational features
External features

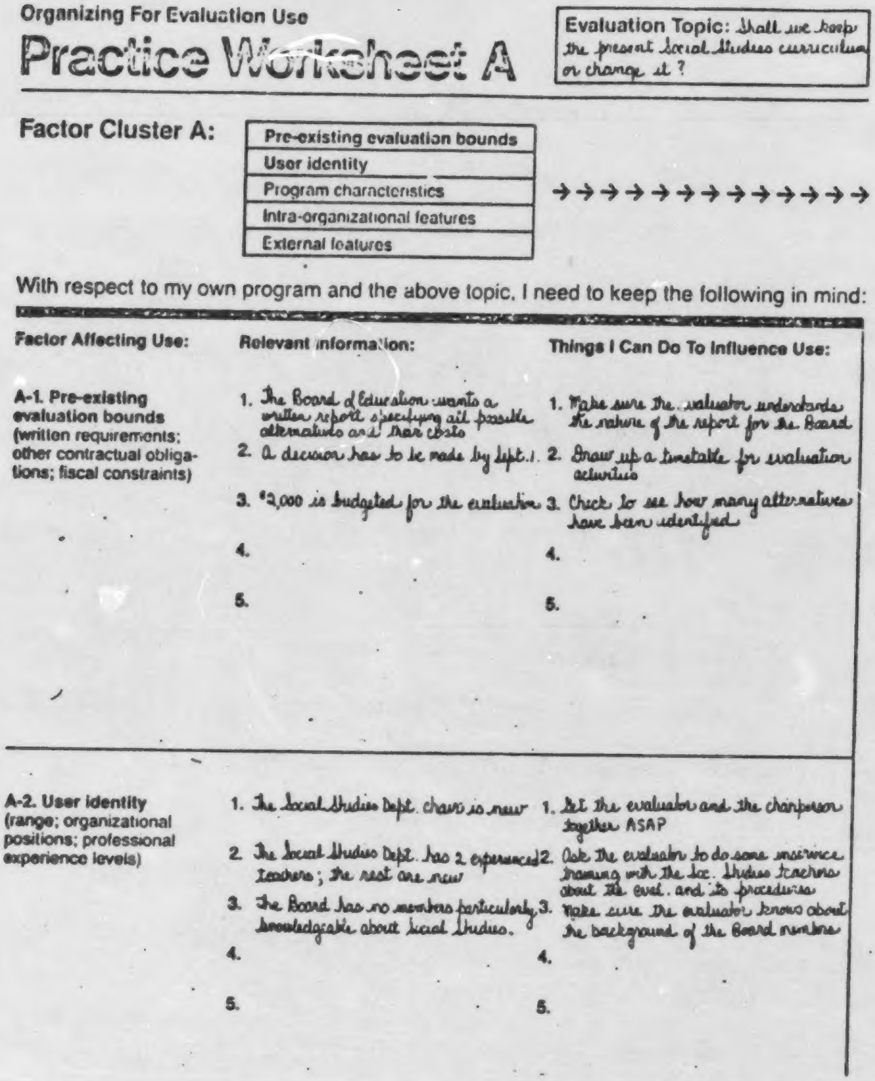
→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-1. Pre-existing evaluation bounds (written requirements; other contractual obligations; fiscal constraints)	1. The Board of Education wants a written report specifying all possible alternatives and their costs	1. Make sure the evaluator understands the nature of the report for the Board
	2. A decision has to be made by Sept. 1.	2. Draw up a timetable for evaluation activities
	3. $2,000 is budgeted for the evaluation	3. Check to see how many alternatives have been identified
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

You've just completed one cycle of the process involved in organizing for evaluation use. You will repeat this cycle -- first noting relevant information on each factor and then deciding what actions you can take to enhance the potential for use throughout all the worksheets. For additional practice, continue now to the second factor listed on Worksheet A, "User Identity."

In filling out the remainder of the worksheet, follow the same procedure as you did for Factor A-1. In case you'd like another example for reference, we've provided our own completed practice worksheet below:



Organizing For Evaluation Use

Practice Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic: Shall we keep the present Social Studies curriculum or change it?

Factor Cluster A:

- Pre-existing evaluation bounds
- User identity
- Program characteristics
- Intra-organizational features
- External features

→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-1. Pre-existing evaluation bounds (written requirements; other contractual obligations; fiscal constraints)	1. The Board of Education wants a written report specifying all possible alternatives and their costs 2. A decision has to be made by Sept. 1. 3. $2,000 is budgeted for the evaluation 4. 5.	1. Make sure the evaluator understands the nature of the report for the Board 2. Draw up a timetable for evaluation activities 3. Check to see how many alternatives have been identified 4. 5.
A-2. User identity (range; organizational positions; professional experience levels)	1. The Social Studies Dept. chair is new 2. The Social Studies Dept. has 2 experienced teachers; the rest are new 3. The Board has no members particularly knowledgeable about Social Studies. 4. 5.	1. Get the evaluator and the chairperson together ASAP 2. Ask the evaluator to do some inservice training with the Soc. Studies teachers about the eval. and its procedures 3. Make sure the evaluator knows about the background of the Board members 4. 5.

Now that you've completed Worksheet A, you are ready to go on to each of the three remaining practice worksheets. We've provided one worksheet for each of the four factor clusters. To work with these model worksheets more effectively, you may want to reproduce them in smaller segments, as we did for your sample worksheet. Or, conversely, you may want to enlarge them so that you can deal with the whole factor pattern at once. Or you may want to list and consider the factor clusters, and your course of action in organizing for evaluation use, in some other way. For those who are interested, a supplementary workbook is available containing individual worksheets and step-by-step instructions (Alkin and Jacobson, 1983). You will need to decide for yourself how you want to proceed.

The Next Step

Regardless of how you choose to proceed, you will need to deal with each of the factors in all four of the factor clusters in order to complete the full pattern of evaluation planning, execution, and use. Of course, some of you may be in a position to complete all of the worksheets now -- but we suspect that such readers will be in the minority. Different readers will be at different stages of the evaluation process. Most will probably be in the early stages and so will feel comfortable filling out one or more of the worksheets, but not all of them at this time. If this is the case with you, then you should go back to these worksheets at the appropriate time and fill them out as needed. Don't forget to look back at the worksheets you completed earlier to make sure that you have carried out the actions listed in the third column!

You may be someone who is not currently participating in an evaluation. Perhaps you are reading this handbook simply to increase your understanding of evaluation. If this is the case, you may also benefit from the discussion. We urge you to reflect on the factor clusters and consider how they might apply in situations you have encountered in the past. Consider also what you might do in the future to make yourself more effective as a project administrator in organizing for evaluation use.

Or perhaps you are not an administrator at all. Perhaps you are an evaluator, reading this book to see what kinds of actions administrators may take in organizing your evaluation. We hope that the material presented in this book has forced you to take a fresh look at the whole evaluation enterprise, that it has given you some new ideas about how to perform evaluations that will make a difference. You will find that it is very gratifying to know that your evaluation efforts will have some payoff, that they will amount to more than a report gathering dust on a bookshelf.

To those researchers or evaluation theorists who picked up this book out of curiosity, we can say that we hope you have not been put off by the absence of technical language and of the scholarly apparatus of footnotes. We hope that you have found some ideas here that will inspire and inform your own future work. You may wish to look more closely at the references noted in Appendix A as you reflect further on our comments.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH LITERATURE SYNTHESIS

SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE ON EVALUATION USE

Prepared by
James Burry

Based on a review of the literature on evaluation use, the following factors appear to have a bearing on the degree to which evaluation information may be used. The individual factors are placed in three major categories: Human Factors, Context Factors, and Evaluation Factors.

Human factors reflect evaluator and user characteristics with a strong influence on use. Included here are such factors as people's attitudes toward and interest in the program and its evaluation, their backgrounds and organizational positions, their professional styles.

Context factors consist of the requirements and fiscal constraints facing the evaluation, and relationships between the program being evaluated and other segments of its broader organization and surrounding community.

Evaluation factors refer to the actual conduct of the evaluation, the procedures used in the conduct of the evaluation, and the quality of the information it provides.

In the synthesis, the information drawn from the literature is presented as follows:

Column one -- Factor. This column lists those factors identified as having a bearing on evaluation use.

Column two -- Research literature. This column presents information drawn from empirical research, in educational and other settings, on the matter of evaluation use. For each work identified, statements are drawn typifying the factor it elaborates and its association with use.

Column three -- Theoretical/conceptual literature. This column identifies works from the theoretical/conceptual literature which have also identified the factor and/or association in column two.

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I. HUMAN FACTORS		
A. Evaluator Characteristics		
1. Commitment to use of evaluation results	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Utilization is enhanced when the evaluator actively "strives to facilitate and stimulate the use of information." Appropriate stimulation tactics will depend on audience orientation (p. 245) and the rapport established. Braskamp & Brown, 1980. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluator must take an active role in fostering utilization. He or she cannot assume that the audience will act on information contained in a final report (p. 92). Kennedy, 1982. The evaluator committed to use of information may enlist the support of an administrator in this endeavor. This administrator, in turn, may attempt to "enlist" the support of subordinates in the use of information. The tactics used to enlist support down the system may lead to attitudes ranging from neutrality to acceptance, to hostile, to anxiety (pp. 122-123). This factor is associated with political understanding audience composition, and administrator style. King & Pechman, 1982. The evaluator committed to user involvement must be aware of the existence of kinds of "non-use" and their causes (p. 55). For example, non-use may be appropriate if the results do	Lange & Speiss, 1974 Alkin, 1975 Holley & Lee, 1978 Connor, 1979 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Apling & Kennedy, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Holley & Totusek, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Chalimsky, 1983 Holley, 1983 Kean, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.A.1. cont.	not deserve to be used or when the organizational and political context prevents use. Mis-use, or inappropriate use, may occur if a user manipulates or otherwise misapplies appropriate results. Another kind of mis-use, inappropriate non-use, can happen if results are maliciously ignored, treated with indifference, or not communicated to users. Reisner et al, 1982. An evaluator who believes that "evaluations are a waste of time unless they are used by someone" (p. 59) and who works "to create positive [user] attitudes toward utilization" (p.60) enhances the potential for utilization.	
2. View of desirability of user involvement	Stecher, Alkin, & Flesher, 1981. Utilization can be enhanced by involving users in both the conduct of the evaluation and in planning processes for its utilization (p. 133). Alkin, Stecher, & Geiger, 1982. Four types of evaluation services can be provided in the interest of fostering user involvement in the evaluation: increasing user understanding of evaluation; improving user capabilities in testing and data interpretation; providing consultation on how findings may be used; and helping develop evaluation procedures to meet local needs. To the extent these activities foster local involvement, the evaluator is better able to deal with such factors as audience expectations for the evaluation, their preferred forms of information -- evaluation and others, and the most appropriate manner of reporting, thus building a joint concern for utilization. (p. 55)	Windle & Bates, 1974 Alkin, 1975 Caplan, et al., 1975 Holley & Lee, 1978 Connor, 1979 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Holley & Totusek, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Chelimsky, 1983 Griffin, et al., 1983 Kean, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
3. Choice of role	Patton, 1978. When the evaluator "takes direct, personal responsibility for getting information to the right people," the utilization potential is enhanced. Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. An evaluator philosophy that stresses "the importance of having the evaluation serve the project and not just meet the pro forma...requirements" helps engender trust. This factor is associated with audience orientation and their predisposition to evaluation (p. 208). Kennedy, 1982. Beyond taking the stance that his or her job is "to serve," the [in house] evaluator may not be able to define his/her role; "role is determined to a large extent by the organizations they serve" (p. 161). Successful evaluators will adopt a problem-solving strategy that is compatible with their district's problem-solving strategies. Dickey, n.d.(a) To enhance utilization, "evaluators should adopt a more collaborative role, involving the decision-maker and the staff in decisions about the evaluation" (p. 24).	Guba & Stufflebeam, 1970 Cox, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Connor, 1979 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Boruch & Cordray, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Hamilton, 1980 Kennedy, Neuman, & Apling, 1980 Apling & Kennedy, 1981 Braverman, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Thompson, 1981 Weiss, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Griffin, et al., 1983 Kean, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)
4. Rapport with users	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Evaluator rapport with his or her audiences will generally contribute to the use of information (p. 244).	Aronson & Sherwood, 1972 Alkin, 1975 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.A.4. cont.	Braskamp & Brown, 1980. To the extent that the evaluator demonstrates understanding of the program, and its internal and external political environment, rapport is enhanced and the potential for utilization is increased (p. 93).	
5. Understanding political considerations	Braskamp & Brown, 1980. The evaluator who demonstrates political understanding is in a better position to work toward utilization (p. 93). Cichon & Dwyer, 1982. "Evaluation is only one part of the ongoing social and political context of any educational program and, as such, it can either become a part of the system from the ground up or it can be left to chance to fit at the end" (p. 23). This factor is associated with evaluator role, composition of audience and its organizational context, and sources of information beyond the evaluation. King & Pechman, 1982. Successful collaboration, in the interest of utilization, is difficult and need not enhance utilization. Political factors may preclude collaboration; users may view the need for collaboration as an indication of poor evaluation management (p. 23).	Alkin, 1975 Cox, 1977 Granville, 1977 Brandl, 1978 Brickell, 1978 Pelz, 1978 Campbell, 1979 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Weiss, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1932 Kean, 1983 Nagel, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
6. Credibility	Brown & Braskamp, 1980. Credibility is an important determinant of utilization. Credibility is related to the trust program staff places in the evaluator, and to their perception of how well he or she understands their program (p. 93). Alkin, Stecher, & Geiger, 1982. These case studies clearly identified "evaluator reputation and credibility" as a relevant factor in evaluation use (p. 82). This factor is associated with evaluator role, audience rapport, relevance of information provided, and audience predisposition to evaluation in terms of fostering utilization. Reisner et al, 1982. "Forcefulness and earned respect" seem to typify credible evaluators. This determinant of utilization is associated with such personal evaluator characteristics as his or her desire to serve the needs of the program being evaluated (p. 59).	Alkin, 1973 Windle & Bates, 1974 Alkin, 1975 Guba, 1975 Cox, 1977 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Stalford, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Griffin, et al, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)
7. Background and identity	Braskamp, Brown, & Newman, 1978. While the title of the evaluator can influence audience perception of the overall objectivity of the evaluator, title does not seem to affect audience agreement with the recommendations the evaluator makes (pp. 448-449). This factor is associated with credibility, composition of the audience, and their information needs. Newman, Brown, & Littman, 1982. The sex of the evaluator may have variable effect depending upon factors associated with the evalution report and factors associated with the audience (p. 18). Sex	Alkin, 1975 Alkin & Law, 1980 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.A.7. cont.	bias is likely to be subtle; i.e., when audiences are judging unfamiliar material, or of an unfamiliar field, they are more likely to make stereotypical responses.	
B. User Characteristics		
1. Identity		
a. range of users	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. There are often multiple audiences for an evaluation, or parts of an evaluation. This factor is associated with evaluator role and allegiance to selected audiences (p. 253). Kennedy, 1982. "...to the extent that different participants define issues differently, a given piece of evidence may be perceived as more or less relevant to different participants and as equally relevant but differentially instructive" (p. 33). This factor is associated with evaluator role, amount and type of contact, sources of information beyond evaluation, and audience interest in evaluation.	Alkin, 1973 Alkin, 1975 Cox, 1977 Wise, 1978 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Braverman, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Altschuld, et al, 1983 Chelimsky, 1983 Kean, 1983 Nagel, 1983 Peck & Triplett, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
b. organizational positions	Alkin, Kosekoff, Fitzgibbon, & Seligman, 1974. The evaluator's perception of the relevant decision makers -- those in a position to act upon the information, can influence the usefulness of the information for decision making (p. 88). This factor is associated with evaluator role selected, evaluation processes selected, the kind of information selected, and how it is reported. King & Pechman, 1982. Utilization "requires the explicit and continual action-based support of powerful administrators" (p. 32). But this support by itself does not guarantee use, and some people will use evaluations even in the absence of urging by their superiors. This factor is associated with political understanding, the requirements for the evaluation, organizational considerations, and the evaluation questions of interest.	Brickell, 1974 Meltsner, 1976 Cook & Pollard, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Resnick, et al, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 O'Reilly, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Altschuld, et al, 1983 Kean, 1983
c. professional experience levels	Newman, Brown, & Littman, 1982. Persons "closest to the decision-making process" [administrators] appear to be "more critical [of the evaluator] than novices" (p. 18). This factor is associated with evaluator role, audience for the report, and composition of the audiences.	Alkin, 1973 Holley & Lee, 1978 Connor, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
2. Interest in the evaluation		
a. views about the program being evaluated	Kennedy, 1982. Audience views toward and commitment to a program may be such that decisions about the program have been made before the evaluation data have been collected. Should the audience favor the program, and expect evaluation results to be positive, then it will be difficult to build a utilization potential into evaluation information that runs counter to that position (p. 80). This factor is associated with political understanding, the role of non-evaluation information, the audience's perceived risk, audience openness to change, and evaluator commitment to use of results.	Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981
b. program questions and concerns	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Potential users of an evaluation may have many varied questions or concerns about the program being evaluated. This factor is associated with audience composition and their preferred forms of information (p. 238-239). Braskamp & Brown, 1980. Discussion and negotiation between evaluator and program staff should address the purpose of the evaluation and how its results might be utilized. The earlier the staff is involved in such deliberations the greater the potential for utilization (p. 92).	Rodman & Kolodny, 1964 Bauman, 1976 Cox, 1977 David, 1978 Holley & Lee, 1978 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cronbach et al, 1980 Leviton & Boruch, 1980 Braverman, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Studer, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.B.2.b. cont.	Daillak, 1980. Schools often need information on a set of issues that may be quite different from, and less ambitious than, what the evaluator might expect. This factor is associated with audience expectations for the evaluation in terms of the potential for utilization (pp. 153-155). Cichon & Dwyer, 1982. "...an evaluation should answer questions raised from inside the program ...When the questions guiding a study come from the program personnel themselves, there is an interest in and commitment to the inquiry engendered by the ownership." (p. 24). This factor is associated with evaluator view of user involvement, amount and type of contact, and reporting format and substance. Kennedy, 1982. If a variety of potential users are involved, use is likely to increase when they can "agree to modify their positions on a broad class of events and practices, so that each could change a variety of decisions and actions in the future... Agreement [is likely to be met] by modifying the message presumed to have come from the evidence" (p. 53). This factor is associated with evaluator role, user involvement, and communication of information.	Altschuld, et al., 1983 Chelimsky, 1983 Kean, 1983 Nagel, 1983 Peck & Triplett, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
c. urgency of questions and concerns	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. The urgency associated with an evaluation may range from assuring that a report is submitted by a certain date, to addressing forthcoming decisions by program authorities, to generating data to help resolve staff conflict (p. 238). To the extent that an evaluation is to address multiple questions, and to the extent that the urgency of the questions varies, the evaluator must determine which are the most pressing issues. If the issues are not dealt with, it is unlikely that the evaluation will be used to answer any questions.	Holley & Lee, 1978 Holley, 1979 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981
d. predisposition to evaluation/the evaluator	Anderson, Ciarlo, & Brodie, 1981. "...the strength and nature of preexisting feelings about an issue may be expected to strongly influence the potential utilizer's interest in working with the evaluator and considering the information that the evaluator offers" (p. 122). King & Pechman, 1982. To enhance utilization potential, the evaluator will need to gauge the existence and degree of disharmony behind users' "espoused theories [stated beliefs] and "theories in use" [actions] (p. 27). This factor is associated with political understanding, information dialogue, and user personal characteristics.	Davis & Salasin, 1975 Forgione, Kaplan, & Orland, 1979 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Kennedy, Apling, & Neuman, 1980 Crowley, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Nagel, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
e. perceived need for the evaluation	Brown, Newman, & Rivers, 1980. Persons with a high perceived need for evaluation information tend to be more satisfied with the evaluation and thus the potential for evaluation is increased. This factor is associated with evaluator role and credibility (pp. 67-73).	Cox, 1977 Rich, 1977 Dobson, et al, 1978 Holley & Lee, 1978 Pelz, 1978 Florio, et al, 1979 Holley, 1979 Young & Comptois, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982
f. expectations for the evaluation	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. The evaluator who is not tuned to program expectations is likely to lose that audience and the potential for utilization is diminished. This factor is associated with evaluator role, rapport, and evaluation processes selected (p. 238). King & Pechman, 1982. The evaluator committed to use must understand that use may be "signalling" (information used to report outside the system) or	Campbell, 1969 Carter, 1971 Kiesler, 1971 Alkin, 1975 Davis & Salasin, 1975 Rein & White, 1975 Granville, 1977 Brandl, 1978 Pelz, 1978 Studer, 1978 Holley, 1979 Rich, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cronbach, et al., 1980 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Studer, 1981 Weiss, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.B.2.f. cont.	"charged" (information used inside the system (p. 36). While signalling often involves no more than the perfunctory submission of a required report which has little internal relevance, charged use suggests internal action or information use. Charged use may be "instrumental" -- an action directly linked to a specific piece of information; "persuasive" -- information used for personal ends; or "conceptual" -- information leading to a gradual change in someone's thinking over time. Evaluator understanding of the audience's intended uses can enhance utilization.	Chelimsky, 1983 Griffin, et al, 1983 Kean, 1983 Nagel, 1983
g. risks of the evaluation	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. There are individual and institutional risks and potential benefits in conducting an evaluation. Users, depending on their orientation to evaluation and their expectations, will make decisions about costs and rewards which influence the extent to which evaluation information is used and the uses to which it is put (p. 250).	Connor, 1979 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Thompson, 1981 Nagel, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)
3. Commitment to use of evaluation results	Alkin, Stecher, & Geiger, 1982. The attitudes of decision makers toward using evaluation is a factor strongly related to evaluation use (p. 85). This factor is associated with audience predisposition to evaluation and their openness to its use. King & Pechman, 1982. The evaluator who acts as if his work will be used by a "rational decision maker" who will make "big bang" decisions should not expect	Brickell, 1974 Fairweather, et al, 1974 Alkin, 1975 Caplan, et al, 1975 Glaser, 1976 Chelimsky, 1977 Cook, 1978 Lynn, 1978 Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978 Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979 Hall, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.B.3. cont.	to be disappointed if this kind of utilization does not occur (pp. 17-18). This factor is associated with evaluator role, view of user involvement, processes selected, and communication of information. Reisner, et al., 1982. A significant decision maker's support of evaluation . . . tends to increase utilization (p. 60). Dickey, n.d(a). "...the project director is most likely to use the evaluation when he or she is interested in and committed to it..." (p. 17).	Chelimsky, 1983 Griffin, et al, 1983
4. Professional styles		
a. administrative and organizational styles	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Utilization of evaluation information is enhanced when the decision maker has the administrative and organizational skills necessary to "get things done," to start action [and] to carry it through to successful conclusion (p. 255). Cichon & Dwyer, 1982. "...management and evaluation functions can and should be integrated in the program leadership role" (p. 23). To that extent that educational managers incorporate evaluation findings in their daily routine activities, the potential for utilization is enhanced.	Alkin, 1973 Cooley, 1980 Stalford, 1980 Holley & Totusek, 1981

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
I.B.4.a. cont.	Kennedy, 1982. Information, rather than being the principal contributor to a decision, "is instead a tool used well or readily by all participants, thus whatever [decision] develops will not be determined by the substance of the evidence but by the distribution of political and manipulative skills among participants" (p. 67). This factor is associated with political understanding, the role of other information, and the users' organizational positions.	
b. initiative	King & Pechman, 1982. "...self-confidence...and interest in and openness to evaluation [can] separate likely users from non-users" (p. 30). But this is not exclusively associated wth program advocacy; rather it suggests a personality who can take the initiative to apply the information at hand and who is supported by "a favorable political context and climate" (p. 32). This factor is associated with user's risk perception, view of the program, evaluation expectations, and organizational factors. McColskey, et al, 1983. "Principals who take more of a lead in directing the school seem to need and rely more on information about how the school or its programs are functioning than those who are less explicit about the goals and standards of the school (p.6)."	Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Kean, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
c. openness to new ideas or change	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Utilization is enhanced if the decision maker is open to new ideas, is able "to measure probable benefits and risks, to weigh them against each other," and then to act accordingly (p. 255). McColskey, et al, 1983. "There is not much an evaluator can do about an administrator's lack of open-mindedness, but role perceptions and understanding of social science research methods are characteristics of administrators that evaluators can help to modify ...By helping administrators identify goals, means to achieve these goals, and measures to assess progress toward these goals, evaluators may encourage administrators to act as leaders...and to become better information users (pp.6-7)."	Hanson, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Studer, 1981 Kean, 1983
5. Information processing	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Users' views about acceptable forms of information can influence evaluation use. The evaluator who feels that a particular question is best answered by quantitative data, and who is working with an administrator who is more comfortable working with qualitative data, can attempt to provide both kinds of information or can attempt to convince the administrator to accept and act upon purely quantitative data. The major point, however, is that the evaluator find out what the acceptable forms of information are (p. 239).	Cox, 1977 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Young & Comptois, 1979 Sproull & Zubrow, 1981 Weiss, 1978 Mintzberg, 1973 Nagel, 1973 Holley, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
II. CONTEXT FACTORS		
A. Preexisting Evaluation Bounds		
1. Written requirements for the evaluation	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. The evaluator and program managers must discuss the range of requirements -- specified data, analytic requirements, reporting needs -- that emanate inside and outside the project. To the extent that there are conflicts between these requirements, or that one set of requirements receives preeminence, the likelihood for utilization may be reduced (p.237).	Alkin & Law, 1980 Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation 1981 Weiss, 1981
2. Other contractual obligations for the evaluator	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. In addition to legal requirements, program managers themselves "may establish -- in written form or otherwise -- other things that an evaluator must do" (p. 237). These obligations may go far beyond state/federal requirements.	Alkin, 1973 Alkin & Law, 1980 O'Reilly, 1981
3. Fiscal constraints	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. To an extent, fiscal requirements can influence the role of the evaluator. This factor is associated with evaluator political understanding and the substance of the evaluation information (p. 237).	Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Dickey n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
B. Organizational Characteristics		Alkin, 1973 Alkin, 1975 Davis & Salasin, 1975 Meltsner, 1976 Cox, 1977 Glaser, 1977 Weiner, et al, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Connor, 1979 Stalford, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Studer, 1981 Thompson, 1981 Altschuld, et al, 1983 Griffin, et al, 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)
1. Intraorganizational features		
a. role of central/district office	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. If the organization of the district office allows evaluator discretion in choice of role/evaluation foci, the evaluator is more able to serve project needs, thereby enhancing the trust that is associated with utilization (p. 248).	Boruch & Cordray, 1980 O'Reilly, 1981
b. interrelationship between unit and central/district administration	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. District responsiveness to the local program and its needs can influence the extent to which the evaluator and program administrator can cooperate to conduct a locally useful evaluation (p. 248).	Holley & Lee, 1978 O'Reilly, 1981

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
c. institutional arrangements	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. District institutional arrangements can affect the conduct of evaluations. For example, in a situation where a central evaluation office serves all programs, an "internal evaluator may have to convince the local site of the usefulness of doing an evaluation. On the other hand, an "external" evaluator hired for a specific evaluation task may have to convince the central office and/or local site of the relevance of his work (p. 248).	Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981
d. unit level autonomy	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Autonomy within and among schools can provide the evaluator and the program developer "the freedom of action necessary to decide...how best to use the evaluation" (p. 248). McColskey, et al, 1983. "Principals who agreed [that they can make] important decisions in the school and [have] the power to affect changes in the school reported that they relied more on...information than those who [do not have such freedom] (p.6)."	Alkin & Law, 1980 O'Reilly, 1981
e. sources of information beyond evaluation, likely to be in use	Patton, et al., 1975. Evaluators who understand that their "results [provide only] another piece of a complicated information puzzle," and who apply that understanding, are likely to produce information that has potential for utilization. Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Site decision makers always have access to information beyond that supplied by the evaluator. The extent to which other information sources are perceived as meeting the	Caplan, et al, 1975 Rein & White, 1975 Chelimsky, 1977 Cox, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Boruch & Wortman, 1979 Connor, 1979 Rich, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hamilton, 1980

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
II.B.1.e. cont.	users' perceived information needs has impact on the ultimate acceptance and utilization of evaluation (p. 249). Evaluator role and desire to involve users in the evaluation are associated with this factor.	Braverman, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Sproull & Zubrow, 1981 Weiss, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Holley, 1983 Nagel, 1983
f. perceived institutional risk	Alkin, Daillak, & White. 1979. If the organizational sense is that there are greater risks associated with the evaluation than there are possible benefits, there is less likelihood of the evaluation being used.	Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 O'Reilly, 1981 Thompson, 1981
2. Extraorganizational features		
a. community climate	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. School-community relations can range from neutrality to highly politicized, partisan settings. This factor, which is associated with evaluator understanding of political considerations, can affect receptivity for utilization, and bears on evaluator role, user concerns, and evaluation procedures and reporting methods (p. 236).	Cox, 1977 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982
b. community influence	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Where the local community has a stake in the program being evaluated, a necessary step in creating the environment conducive	Alkin, 1975 Cox, 1977 Holley, 1979

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
II.B.2.b. cont.	to evaluation receptivity is to enlist community support (p. 218). This factor is associated with the evaluator's role, credibility, and political understanding. Since the administrator will be important in enlisting community suport, his/her administrative and organizational skills, as well as initiative, also bear on this factor. Reisner, et al., 1982. "Utilization increases...when the local community expects to be involved" (p. 60). This factor is associated with evaluator philosophy about user involvement, evaluation commitment to utilization, and local decision makers' attitude toward evaluation.	Alkin & Law, 1980 Cooley, 1980 Stevenson, 1981
c. role of other agencies	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Above and beyond initial mandated requirements, other government agencies can continue to influence the conduct or focus of an evaluation after it has begun and can have an impact on the eventual utilization of evaluation information (p. 251). This factor is associated with the role of the evaluator, the composition of his audiences, the evaluation processes selected, and the substance of the evaluation report. Utilization may diminish to the extent that the evaluator maintains a static position in a situation where the influence of other government agencies is dynamic.	Holley, 1979 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
C. Program Characteristics		
1. Age/maturity	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. These case studies suggest that new programs use evaluation information for public relations purposes and for building external support for the program (pp. 186-188; 217-220). This use is associated with community influence, composition of the audience, program questions and concerns, and administrator styles. New programs also find evaluation useful in initial curriculum, staffing, procedural and other "informal" decisions because there are fewer vested interests or teacher and administrator resistance to overcome (pp. 67-73; 145-147; 206). Associated factors here are evaluator personal characteristics, information dialogue, amount/type of contact, substance of evaluation information, administrator style, and program questions and concerns.	Alkin, 1973 Holley, 1979 Weiss, 1981 Griffin, et al, 1983
2. Innovativeness	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Programs that are unfamiliar to staff and community, and that entail radical changes in previous practices, draw on evaluation information to clarify initial confusion about content, direction, procedures, and responsibilities (pp. 55, 72, 145). This utilization is associated with evaluator personal characteristics, amount/type of contact with users, substance of evaluation information, and program questions and concerns. Where the innovation is school-wide, evaluation information may be considered superfluous until things "settle down" of their own accord (pp. 148, 212). This disinclination to utilization appears most strongly associated with administrator style and his/her questions and concerns about the program.	

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
3. Overlap with other programs	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Utilization may be related to program overlap, particularly if one program is a component of a larger program. Related factors are methodological rigor, substance of evaluation information, relevance to user concerns, fiscal constraints, site-level autonomy, program questions and concerns, and the administrator's organizational skills.	
III. EVALUATION FACTORS		
A. Information Dialogue	Alkin, Stecher, & Geiger, 1982. Utilization is increased if the evaluator makes serious attempts to involve his audience in such tangible evaluation products as "how to read, analyze, and make decisions upon evaluative data" (p. 91); for example, the data in a report. This factor is associated with evaluator role, his view of audience involvement and commitment to utilization, and his understanding of audience needs within the particular organizational setting.	Downs, 1967 Alkin, 1973 Glaser & Taylor, 1973 Windle & Bates, 1974 Alkin, 1975 Cook & Pollard, 1977 Cox, 1977 Davis & Salasin, 1978 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hill, 1980 Stalford, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Thompson, 1981 Patton, 1982 Altschuld, et al., 1983 Dickey n.d.(b)
1. Amount of interaction between evaluator and users	Braskamp & Brown, 1980. The earlier the evaluator and program staff meet to address the subject of possible utilization the greater the potential for utilization (p. 92).	Cox, 1977 Holley, 1979 Cooley, 1980 Cronbach, et al., 1980

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
2. Quality of interaction between evaluator and users	Anderson, Ciarlo, & Brodie, 1981. "...how much one can affect the degree of caring or concern about an issue may very well be the primary determinant of future changes in [utilization] behavior or practice" (p. 122). This factor is associated with audience expectations for and predispositions to evaluation. Reisner, et al., 1982. "Evaluation use increases when decision makers are assisted in understanding how they might use evaluation data (p. 65).	Hamilton, 1980 Vander Ploeg, 1980 Braverman, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Chelimsky, 1983 Kean, 1983
B. Substance of Evaluation Information		
1. Information relevance for users	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. The more the focus of the evaluation finding/recommendation reflects an important program concern, the more it is likely to be used in decision making (p. 200). This factor is associated with evaluator role and the identification of user concerns. King & Pechman, 1982. "...there is not necessarily a direct relationship between improved written reports and improved levels of use.. If a user finds written information of value to his particular situation, he is likely to use it, regardless of its quality; if, for whatever reason, it does not seem of immediate value, he will not use it" (pp. 20-21). This factor is associated with political and organizational factors, and audience composition.	Wholey, et al., 1969 Fairweather, et al., 1974 Alkin, 1975 Averch, 1975 Nielson, 1975 Williams & Wysong, 1975 Banta & Bauman, 1976 Cox, 1977 Datta, 1977 Davis, et al., 1977 Schmidt, et al., 1977 David, 1978 Holley & Lee, 1978 Lynn, 1978 Holley, 1979 Pelz, 1979

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
III.B.1. cont.	Dickey, n.d.(a) "...the project director is most likely to use the evaluation when...its recommendations [are] helpful..." (p. 17).	Resnick, et al, 1979 Cooley, 1980 Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Chelimsky, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983
2. Specific information selected for users	Braskamp & Brown, 1980. Important program decisions are often based on a broad range of information needs. To the extent that specific evaluation information addresses these needs, the higher the potential for utilization (p. 93). Kennedy, 1982. "...if one acknowledges that information can have multiple meanings, then one introduces a host of questions about the difference between its factual meaning and its normative message, and about its potential to make a substantive contribution to the forthcoming decision" (p. 66). (Kennedy, 1982.) This factor is associated with evaluator understanding of political considerations, relevance of information, and composition of the audience.	Alkin, 1975 O'Reilly, 1981 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
C. Evaluation Reporting		
1. Frequency of information provided	Kennedy, Apling, & Newman, 1980. While the effect of timing of a final, formal evaluation report on utilization is difficult to gauge, timely and well focused formative reports can increase the potential for utilization. Cichon & Dwyer, 1982. "...if your interest in using the results of an evaluation begins when the results come in, you're probably too late. Use issues must be addressed from the start of an evaluation to maximize the potential" (p. 23). This factor is associated with evaluator role, view of desirability of user involvement, and user expectations for and predisposition to evaluation.	Cox, 1977 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Holley, 1983 Peck & Triplett, 1983
2. Timing of information	Alkin, Kosecoff, Fitzgibbon, & Seligman, 1974. Evaluations which provide timely formative information -- e.g., which help project directors identify possible problems and which provide recommendations for program changes -- increase the potential for utilization (p. 87). This factor is associated with the composition of the audience and understanding of political considerations in terms of likelihood of utilization. David, 1978. "The timing of an evaluation can by itself restrict the potential utility by not meshing with the timing of the program planning" (p. 38).	Guba, 1975 Banta & Bauman, 1976 Falcone & Jaeger, 1976 Florio, et al., 1979 Young & Comptois, 1979 Hill, 1980 Mitchell, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Chelimsky, 1983 Peck & Triplett, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983 Dickey, n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
III.C.2. cont.	Dickey, n.d.(a) " the project director is most likely to use the evaluation...when its final report is produced on time for the project's needs" (p. 17).	
3. Format of presentations	Braskamp & Brown, 1980. Using appropriate means of informal presentation can enhance utilization. This factor is associated with evaluator role, audience's orientation and involvement, the evaluation proceses selected, and evaluator commitment to utilization (p. 94). Alkin, Stecher, & Geiger, 1982. Utilization is increased to the extent the evaluator selects presentation methods and formats which are appropriate to his audience and which clearly display answers to audience questions and needs (p. 89).	Alkin, 1975 Caplan, 1975 Nielson, 1975 Cox, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Connor, 1979 Florio, et al., 1979 Holley, 1979 Cooley, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Holley & Totusek, 1981 Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Weiss, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Chelimsky, 1983 Holley, 1983 Peck & Triplett, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983
4. Statistical/narrative data	Brown, Braskamp, & Newman, 1978. The amount of data and jargon in an evaluation report can affect the audience perception of its technicality and difficulty (p. 339). This factor interacts with evaluator credibility, audience composition/orientation, and preferred modes of information in the potential for utilization.	Alkin, 1975 Holley & Lee, 1978 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Griffin, et al., 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
III.C.4. cont.	Brown, Braskamp, & Newman, 1978. Jargon-loaded reports are likely to be seen as more "technical" and "difficult" than jargon-free reports. However, the effect of jargon may be mitigated by the inclusion of data which help the audience to interpret and understand the information (p. 339). This factor is associated with evaluator credibility, audience composition, and preferred forms of information.	
5. Format of reports	Reisner, et al., 1982. Graphic, narrative, and nontechnical modes of presentation, especially when they describe program strengths and weaknesses and give recommendations for program change, increase the utility of evaluation information to local decision makers (p. 65).	Alkin, 1973 Windle & Bates, 1974 Alkin, 1975 Agarwala-Rogers, 1977 Cox, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Holley, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Apling & Kennedy, 1981 Braverman, 1981 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Leviton & Hughes, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Thompson, 1981 King, Thompson, & Pechman, 1982 Chelimsky, 1983 Holley, 1983 Kean, 1983 Peck & Triplett, 1983 Radzikowski & Seaver, 1983

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
D. Evaluation Procedures		
1. Methods used		
a. appropriateness	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. Selection of processes that are appropriate to program context and audience orientation will help enhance the potential for utilization (p. 240). Dickey, n.d.(a) "...the project director is most likely to use the evaluation when he or she...sees its procedures as appropriate" (p. 17).	Cox, 1977 Holley & Lee, 1978 Caplan, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations, 1981 O'Reilly, 1981 Chelimsky, 1983 Nagel, 1983
b. rigor	Cichon & Dwyer, 1982. "unquestioning adherence to [strict research] procedures may well get in the way of usefulness for program improvement" (p. 25). To the extent that design, measurement, and analysis procedures are sensitive to the purpose and scope of the evaluation need, the potential for utilization is enhanced.	Wholey, 1969 Mann, 1972 Alkin, 1975 Caplan, et al, 1975 Davis & Salasin, 1975 Cook & Pollard, 1977 Cox, 1977 Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1977 Brickell, 1978 Connor, 1979 Alkin & Law, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations, 1981 Stevenson, 1981 Weiss, 1981 Chelimsky, 1983 Kean, 1983 Dickey, n.d.(b)

1. FACTOR	2. RESEARCH LITERATURE	3. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE
2. Dealing with mandated tasks	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. If the evaluation stresses, or is perceived to stress, mandated requirements, local perception of the evaluation's usefulness decreases as well as the potential for utilization (p. 76). Reisner et al, 1982. "Utilization increases when evaluations are specifically designed (or are permitted the flexibility) to meet local needs" (p. 61). This factor is associated with the matter of evaluation bounds, program organizational factors, and program staff interest in evaluation. Dickey, n.d.(a). In the interest of enhancing utilization, "evaluators should contract to undertake formative evaluations or summative evaluations, but not both simultaneously" (p. 25).	Holley, 1979 Cooley, 1980 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981 Holley & Totusek, 1981 Thompson, 1981
3. Use of a general model	Alkin, Daillak, & White, 1979. An evaluator need not apply a formal evaluation model to enhance utilization. Rather, utilization is likely to be enhanced to the extent that the evaluator selects methods so as to be sensitive to the social/organizational context he is working in, and to provide a balance between treatment of mandated requirements and the local audience orientation (p. 240). The role selected by the evaluator will have a bearing on the procedures selected and their degree of success. Lawton, et al, 1983. "It does appear that no single or small set of strategies stands out as a predictor of evaluation success. Rather, it seems that evaluators [use] a wide variety of strategies to conduct an evaluation" (p.3).	Cox, 1977 Hansen, Martin, & Oxford, 1981

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APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL BLANK WORKSHEETS

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet A

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster A:

Pre-existing evaluation bounds
User identity
Program characteristics
Intra-organizational features
External features

→→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-1. Pre-existing evaluation bounds (written requirements; other contractual obligations; fiscal constraints)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-2. User identity (range; organizational positions; professional experience levels)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet A (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
A-3. Program characteristics (age; maturity; innovativeness; overlap with other programs)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-4. Intraorganizational features (central/district office roles & relationships; institutional arrangements & autonomy; other likely kinds of information; perceived institutional & financial risk)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
A-5. External features (community climate & influence; role of other agencies)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet B

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster B:

User interest in evaluation
User commitment to use
Evaluator characteristics (selected) →→→→→→→→→→→→→
Evaluation procedures—plan
User professional style(s)

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
B-1. User interest in evaluation (views about program; questions & concerns; predisposition to eval./evaluator; need for eval.; expectations and risks for the eval.)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
B-2. User commitment to use	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet B (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
B-3. Evaluator characteristics (selected) (background/identity; credibility; choice of role; willingness to involve user; commitment to use; political sensitivity)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
B-4. Evaluation procedures—plan	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
B-5. User professional style(s) (administrative & organizational skills; initiative; openness to new ideas)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet C

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster C:

- Evaluation procedures—execution
- Substance of evaluation information
- Evaluator commitment to use →→→→→→→→→→→
- Information dialogue—formative
- User information processing preferences

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
C-1. Evaluation procedures—execution (methods to be used; dealing with mandated tasks)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
C-2. Substance of evaluation information (specific information selected; information relevance to audience)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Worksheet C (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
C-3. Evaluator commitment to use	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
C-4. Information dialogue—formative (amount & quality of interaction between evaluator and user(s))	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
C-5. User information processing preferences	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet D

Evaluation Topic:

Factor Cluster D:

Evaluation reporting
Evaluator characteristics (selected)
Information dialogue—summative
User commitment to use

→→→→→→→→→→→→→

With respect to my own program and the above topic, I need to keep the following in mind:

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
D-1. Evaluation reporting (frequency; timing; format of report; statistical/narrative data; format of presentation)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
D-2. Evaluator characteristics (selected) (commitment to use; political sensitivity)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.

Organizing For Evaluation Use

Worksheet D (Continued)

Factor Affecting Use:	Relevant Information:	Things I Can Do To Influence Use:
D-3. Information dialogue—summative (amount, type and quality of interaction between evaluator and user(s))	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.
D-4. User commitment to use	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
	4.	4.
	5.	5.